



Marillo

Hallyer

The immaculate Conception!

D & J. Sadler.

6

and let the aromatic spices thereof flow.

21693

66

There is no spot in this, and there is not a spot in this.

Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and as the stars in array?

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

BLESSED VIRGIN.

BY CARDINAL GONZALEZ.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE,

BY BATHEN C. S. J.

THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BY MISS J. B. C. S. J. WITH EPIGRAMS FROM THE PEN OF A POETRYMAN.

BY THE REV. FATHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

A DISCOURSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BY ST. ALPHON-
SUS MARE.

SUS MARE, A DISCOURSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BY ST. ALPHON-
SUS MARE.

HOLINESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BY ST. ALPHON-
SUS MARE.

PASSAGE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BY ST. ALPHON-
SUS MARE.

DOCTRINE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BY ST. ALPHON-
SUS MARE.

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1860.



come, make haste, my dove, my beautiful one, and come.

1693



For the purpose of the Convention

Arise, O north wind, and come; O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.

1653

66

Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.

A
POLEMICAL TREATISE
ON THE
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN.

BY CARDINAL LAMBRUSCHINI.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE,
BY FATHER FELIX, S. J.

THE FRENCH PORTION OF THE WORK TRANSLATED BY MRS. J.
SADLIER, AND THE LATIN EXTRACTS FROM THE
HOLY FATHERS, BY A CLERGYMAN.

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED,
A DISCOURSE ON THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BY ST. ALPHON-
SUS MARIE DE LIGUORI; THE LETTERS APOSTOLIC OF HIS
HOLINESS POPE PIUS IX; CARDINAL WISEMAN'S
PASTORAL ON THE DECLARATION OF THE
DOGMA AT ROME, ETC., ETC.

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1860.

Arise, O north wind, and come; O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.

Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and her countenance as the sun in array?



Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come.

1693

WE hereby approve of the publication of a Treatise on
the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
by His Eminence CARDINAL LAMBRUSCHINI.

VERY REV'D. WM. STARRS, V. G.

NEW-YORK,

Feast of St. Joseph,

MARCH 19, 1855.



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District of New-York.



atise on
Mary,

V. G.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.



THE work now offered to the public is made up of several parts. Of these, the principal is the famous Treatise of the late lamented Cardinal Lambruschini, containing copious extracts from the works of the Holy Fathers: the latter are, in this translation, rendered from the Latin by a clergyman who kindly undertook that most important part of the translation. We give as an Introduction a series of articles which appeared some years ago in *L'Ami de la Religion*, from the pen of an eminent Jesuit, Father Felix. They were written as a review of Father Perrone's work on the *Immaculate Conception*. Although both treating of the same subject, the two works are entirely different: that of his Eminence Cardinal Lambruschini gives, as it were, the theological bearings of the question; that of the learned Jesuit is of a more philosophic nature, and pre-

sents rather the *rationale* of what may be considered the great question of the day. Both together will, it is hoped, form a complete treatise on the *Immaculate Conception*.

To both these works we have appended the Latin quotations in the form of notes, for the satisfaction of the learned.

In order to make the work still more complete, we have given an account of the proceedings at Rome during the memorable days preceding and succeeding the declaration of the Dogma. These we have copied from the most reliable of the public journals. We also append the Discourse of St. Alphonso Liguori on the Immaculate Conception; the Letters Apostolic (Latin and English) of our Holy Father Pius IX, announcing the solemn definition of the doctrine, together with the beautiful Pastoral of Cardinal Wiseman on the same subject.

Thus complete, we send forth the work, in the name and honor of Her whom all Christians delight to honor, now more than ever, as the *Queen conceived without sin*.

MONTREAL,

Feast of the Purification of B. V. Mary,

FEBRUARY 2d, 1855.

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INTRODUCTION.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CONTROVERSY.

BY FATHER FELIX, S. J.

MEN whose minds love to follow in events here below the traces of the divine plans, have sometimes asked themselves, "Why has God permitted the belief in the Immaculate Conception to meet with contradiction in the Church? Was it his will that, agitated by dispute, as the tree by the tempest, that belief, by the very effect of the agitation, should strike its roots deeper in the souls of men? that emerging one day from the shock of human ideas, it should glorify the spotless Virgin by the splendor of its testimony? Or rather, was it his purpose to hold opinion divided and science in suspense for a certain time, to leave love the merit of a free and devoted adhesion? God alone knows. But what imports it that Providence has not yet decided? There is a clear manifestation of God's designs to be found in history; it is this: When it pleased the Lord to open a career of

contest for this belief, till then undisputed, he that day decreed that it should be victorious; and that toilsome march through a course of agitation, was, according to the designs of God, but a long prelude to the victory. This is what we find out by following the Reverend Father Perrone in his historical account of a controversy famous in the annals of theology.

The belief in the Immaculate Conception lived in the minds of men, long ages before it was publicly spoken of: for it is worthy of notice that, in the Church, the peaceful reign of belief always precedes the noise of controversy which time brings on. Silently controlling minds, it went on displaying itself more and more by its natural expression, the ceremonies of worship and liturgic forms, when an unforeseen event disturbed the peace of a secular possession. Desirous of obtaining for their church an advantage already enjoyed by so many others, the canons of Lyons took it into their heads one day to institute in that religious city, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and without applying to Rome, they made the solemn inauguration on their own authority. On hearing this, St. Bernard, whose thought filled the Church, whose eye overlooked the world, raised his voice from the depth of his cloister with a cry of admonition and alarm. He was amazed and indignant to see observed in the sanctuary a

solemnity unauthorized by the Pontifical sanction, and he let fall on the Chapter of Lyons the full weight of his displeasure. Whatever might have been St. Bernard's opinion, that great man was set down as an opponent, and his name became, thenceforward, a watchword. Under the influence of his renown, the battle-field was extended far and wide. Two parties are speedily formed: on one side is Nicholas of St. Albans, and on the other Pierre de Celles, covering with the lustre of their respective names a host of others of lesser note: the former contending for the ancient traditions of Great Britain, his native country; the latter for the honor of the great Saint interested in the debate. This struggle, maintained with equal ardor for and against the institution of the festival, continued till the end of the twelfth century. It is, however, to be observed, in passing, that all those who then declared against the solemnity, never pretended to oppose the belief, whilst the defenders of the festival considered themselves bound by the force of circumstances to defend the privilege.

But the human mind, ever prone to penetrate, does not long accept intermediate discussions. Thus, from being at first engaged on the celebration of the feast, the controversy soon passed on to the more dogmatical discussion of the belief; and in this condition it continued all through the

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, agitated as it was by the master minds of the day. Although more radical than it was at the outset, the discussion had not yet sufficiently disengaged the main point from its accessories; and as it always happens, the want of precision on the real object of the controversy, prevented any good that might have accrued on behalf of the truth, until the luminous mind of St. Bonaventure at length discerned and revealed to the contending parties the true nature of the question. The word *Conception* was perpetually recurring on both sides; but what was the meaning of that word? Did it signify the concurrence of material elements in the formation of the virginal body of the Blessed Virgin Mary? or did it simply indicate the union of her holy soul with the body already formed? This distinction was a ray of light illuminating the whole thesis: the Seraphic Doctor had made it understood that, in the latter case, the question was simply this—whether in forming this marvellous work, God had united to the body of the Blessed Virgin, a soul adorned with, or deprived of original justice. Reduced to this formula, the controversy was prolonged, without either party gaining much advantage over the other, when suddenly there was seen to enter the lists a man who was to change the face of things. That man, immortalized by this discussion, was John Duns Scotus. God was

about to show the power of a genius sent by him for the triumph of a cause, when with equal learning and devotion, that man takes his stand on the firm ground of truth. Laying hold of the difficulty just where St. Bonaventure left it, and plunging into the very heart of the question, the Franciscan, by a new mode of attack, armed himself with the arguments of his opponents; and in presence of all the assembled glories of cotemporary science, he pleaded, it is said, the cause of the Immaculate Conception with so much power and effect, that in a very short time his opinion pervaded the schools. The voice of Duns Scotus acted on the minds of men as an electric shock: the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was everywhere propagated with the fame of that great contest; the feast was on all sides inaugurated amid the applause of the churches; a Roman Pontiff was seen to welcome it to the Eternal City, and, encouraged by so high an example, the Benedictines, the Carmelites, the Celestines, the Trinitarians, the children of St. Augustine and of St. Bernard, and especially those who had given to the cause its most illustrious champion, all hastened to open their sanctuaries to a doctrine which was rapidly advancing towards explicit belief.

But such is the misery of human contests: even where science and devotion are brought to bear on the struggle, I know not what mysterious instinct

it is that tends to protract discussion, even when victory appeared decided. The triumph of the prevailing party appears to the others a calamity which must be averted at all risks. Thus it was that the very success contributed to raise again a standard which appeared for ever fallen. The dogma was thought to be compromised by the propagation of a belief which did not quite agree with the theology of its adversaries; the phantom of heresy, evoked by zeal, frightened the defenders of the faith, and it so happened that their very devotion to Catholicity carried the sons of St. Dominic over to the opposition. But notwithstanding the power of these auxiliaries, and the halo of glory which encircled their name, the issue of the contest was no longer doubtful. They could still dispute, but they could not overcome. The thesis of Duns Scotus reigned supreme. The Sorbonne itself, at first astonished at the Franciscan's boldness, had, at length, adopted his opinion; and it is well known what it soon after did in order to secure the services of its doctors on behalf of the glorious privilege. Hence, great was its indignation on hearing one of its own members, opposing Catholic dogma to the Immaculate Conception, charge its defenders with heresy. This insulting accusation, so imprudently made by Jean de Montezon, against a cause so highly patronized, excited a fresh tumult. The two camps were already formed, genius and

learning being found on both sides, when the Council of Basle, lifting up its voice amid the clamor of the contest, declared the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception *pious, conformable to Scripture, and in harmony with Catholic faith and worship*, and commanded its adversaries to be silent. But what could a headless Council do to calm such a storm? It is true, the Pontiffs were there to support the defenders of the *pious* belief with the weight of their venerated word. Sixtus IV was peculiarly favorable to the cause. He was seen alternately throwing open in its favor the treasury of the Church, encouraging by indulgences the office of the *Immaculate* Conception, menacing with his thunders any one who dared to tax with mortal sin the celebration of that office, or to mention as heretical the doctrine which teaches that *Mary was never defiled with the original stain*. Although deeply wounded, the opposition was not crushed, and the Council of Trent found it still living.

It was thought at one time that the august tribunal where the Holy Ghost, through the organ of the Church, decides so many important disputes, would at length put an end to this discussion. The opinion of the Fathers was not doubtful; but adversaries were there, covering themselves, for want of truth, with the triple recommendation of virtue, learning, and Catholic devotion. The Di-



vine Wisdom presiding over the Council suggested moderation, and the decree was not made. Not that a single doubt lingered in the mind of that holy assembly; for, in order to testify to the entire world its sympathy for the Immaculate Conception, the Council declared that it had no intention to include the *Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God*, in the decree which proclaims the universal propagation of original sin in the race of Adam; and it added that the Constitutions of Sixtus IV were to be maintained.

For the good sense of the people, this was sufficient; for obstinate science, it was too little: the party survived this heavy blow. In vain did St. Pius V proscribe a proposition of Baius rejecting Mary's privilege; in vain did he give to the feast of the Conception the hitherto unheard-of sanction of a rigorous precept; in vain did he forbid, under the most severe penalties, the continuance, in any of the vulgar tongues, of a dispute which could only scandalize the people; in vain did the Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition obtain, at the request of the Spanish monarch, a decree marked with the pontifical seal, forbidding any one to affirm, thenceforward, that Mary was *conceived in original sin*; it was still necessary for Gregory XV to silence the adversaries once again, and to forbid them from making their debates public.

Driven back, then, into the depth of souls, the

opposition soon endeavored to return into the controversy by way of equivocation. The word *conception*, so long and so warmly contested, would be given up; but the word *immaculate*, to what did it refer? was it to the *conception* itself? or was it not rather a simple qualification of the *person*? This sophistical distinction openly belied all the antecedents of the controversy; it even insulted the great names mixed up with it on either side; and yet it was about to renew the struggle, when in 1661, on the very day of the Conception, appeared the ever memorable Constitution of Alexander VII. There, every avenue was closed against the spirit of contention; there, the meaning of the festival was clearly explained, the pontifical dispositions revealed, the treasury of the Church opened wider than ever, the devotion to the Immaculate Conception explicitly drawn up, approved, and encouraged; finally, every succeeding Pontiff renewed and sanctioned the menaces of his predecessors against any writing or discourse impugning the *pious* belief.

This was a death-blow to a desperate cause, which had long exhausted its strength by discussion. From that hour opposition was unheard of within the Church; doubt and negation, which formerly manifested themselves in clamor and dissension, dared no longer assail the mind, and there were none but sectarian voices to disturb from time

to time the unanimity of a concert which has continued for two centuries. This universal concord, after a struggle so long and so determined, is a grand and most eloquent testimony in favor of the Immaculate Conception. Yet God had still higher manifestations in store for it. The nineteenth century was to form, as it were, an apogee of glory for this holy belief. Our own age has seen Rome covering it more than ever with the majesty of its approbation. In our days we hear Catholic voices sing in the Litany: *Queen conceived without sin, pray for us*. What do I say? Even amid the pomp of the Sacrifice, is it not given us to hear that word which was a sign of contradiction, resounding like the echo of an unanimous belief, and going up to heaven with the people's prayer?

What was wanting to complete the triumph? Only to see the adversaries themselves coming over in a spirit of love and devotion to the cause they had so long struggled against. Well! this completion of success God reserved for this age. The unspotted Virgin now beholds the most sturdy opponents of her privilege glorying in laying down their arms at her feet as a magnificent trophy of her victory. And was not the general of that valiant militia himself seen, on the 10th of December, 1843, soliciting in Rome, for his brethren, the privilege of celebrating, *juxta proprium ritum*, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and to chant

at the Preface, in the chapels of their Order, that word against which they had so long struggled with all the power of their learning and their voice? Sons of St. Dominic, receive the felicitations of a grateful and rejoicing brotherhood. That cause which must have triumphed by your agency, if truth were not stronger than genius, was destined to fail in your hands; but even in that, God prepared for you a new species of triumph, for He was about to show by your example that there is a glory still greater than that of victory!

Such is the term appointed for the belief in the Immaculate Conception after running such a stormy course. For five hundred years has it been attacked, and for five hundred years has it been victorious. Threatened by genius, by genius is it gloriously defended. Always denied by some, it at length receives the consent of all; finally, accused at one time of heresy by a rash theologian, it manifests itself in the nineteenth century as a devotion eminently Catholic. Such are the mysterious ways of God. That long series of combats was but the march to a solemn triumph. Wonderful policy of God! When He permits a truth to be subjected to human discussion, the voices of men are uplifted; but He, amid the tumult of the strife, silently pursues his course, and hurries on the debate to its inevitable term, where victory awaits the truth. The thought that slowly pierces

each successive phase of that long controversy, appears in the nineteenth century with all the splendor of a supreme definition; and, if it be true that the past and the present prophesy, may we not say that the belief in the Immaculate Conception has in its history a presage of its future, and, as it were, a prediction of its *Catholic* destiny?

What we are now to consider is: *Can the belief in the Immaculate Conception, as it now stands, receive the sanction of a dogmatical definition?* The question is twofold; it regards both the theory and the application; let us divide the elements of the thesis in order to examine them separately. It is of history that this belief never figured in the creed, and that it long divided the minds of men: now, the first question is, Can a belief hitherto free, and long even an object of serious discussion, become an article of faith? Suppose the affirmative; it is incontestable that any belief whatsoever, in order to take its place in the Catholic creed, must have the conditions requisite to form a sufficient basis for the dogmatical definition: does the Immaculate Conception possess these previous conditions? This is the second question.

To ask whether a belief once disputed may be inserted in the creed, is, at the first glance, a question which may appear useless to men versed in theology. Nevertheless, there are few questions which it imports us more to examine at the present

day by the test of true principles. *What, say some, decree faith, create dogma, institute a truth on such a day of such a year!* Such is the scandal of ignorance arising from the heresy and incredulity of our age. It is, therefore, very necessary to ascertain, in the first place, the part which the Church has to play in dogmatical definition.

All belief dogmatically defined must make part of revelation; must consequently be contained in the divine word, whether written or transmitted; for if the word of the Church is the immediate and living rule of our faith, she herself has in the word of God her supreme and fundamental rule. The Church, by dogmatical decision, does not, then, create the truth; she makes neither the dogma, nor the revelation of the dogma; she merely proclaims its existence with an infallible, indeclinable authority. The dogma which authority proclaims to-day, was yesterday; before the decision, it existed in its substance; after the decision it appears with its formula, and is of obligation. The part of the Church, in dogmatical decision, may then be defined: *The legitimate and infallible declaration of a revealed truth.* But a truth may be many ways contained in revelation. It may be in it in the terms which express it, that is to say, *explicitly*, to speak the language of theology; and in that case, the office of the Church is usually confined to proclaiming the divine inspiration of the books which

contain those truths, which may be called the primary truths of Catholic dogma. Such are, in general, the propositions which express the mysteries of the birth, life, and death of our Saviour, and all the truths formally enunciated in the Holy Scriptures. But there are also truths in the depository of revelation which we would seek in vain under their strict terms; and yet they are in it: but how are they in it? *Implicitly*, say the theologians: that is to say, they are in it, as the conclusion is in its principle; or else they are in it of themselves, as truths of *immediate* revelation, but in a sort of latent condition, living in shade and silence, till uplifting the veil which covered them, and emerging by degrees from a certain primitive obscurity, they one day appear in the light derived from the motion of things. Then the truth is marked out, it is perceived, and manifesting itself thus openly before the error which denies it, the Church recognizes it as her thought, and says, on beholding it: *That is my faith; I never believed otherwise.* Can a truth so circumstanced rank with articles of faith?

The question thus laid down has long since received an affirmative solution from theologians of the first order. Bellarmine, Vasquez, Melchior Cano, Suarez, Petau, are here in perfect harmony. Some words from that famous man who summed up, in his own person, the theological school of the sixteenth century, will suffice to indicate the

opinion of that age. "It is certain," says Suarez, "that we now believe truths which the Church did not formerly believe with *explicit* faith, although they were *implicitly* contained in the primitive doctrine.¹ A truth may have been long disputed, and yet a day may come when the Church finds sufficient reasons for inserting it in the Catholic creed. For," adds that great man, "the Church, by her authority, has often decided such controversies, without any new revelation, as may be shown by manifest examples."²

These words of Suarez put us in the way of a decisive demonstration in a Catholic point of view. It is the property of an infallible institution that the deed brings with it the right. You ask what the Church can do? Behold what she does. At Nice, the Church declares the baptism of heretics valid; yet who is ignorant of the solemn debate between St. Stephen and St. Cyprian? At Florence, the Church declares that the saints, after their entire purification, immediately enter into glory. Yet every one knows what a noise was made in the Church by the famous question of the

¹ Verum est aliquam propositionem *explicitè* nunc credi de fide, quæ antea *explicitè* non credebatur ab Ecclesiâ, quamvis *implicitè* in doctrinâ antiquâ contineretur.

Sæpè Ecclesia, suâ auctoritate, similes controversias definivit, absque novâ revelatione expressâ: ut potest manifestis exemplis ostendi. (In Tertium p. D. Thom. q. 27, disp. 3, sect. 6.)

beatific vision. At Trent, the Church proclaims it of tradition and of divine revelation, that adultery does not break the conjugal tie; yet had not learned doctors and provincial councils professed a contrary doctrine? We might here, with the theologians, multiply examples frequent in history; but let us hasten to conclude: the Church has, in the lapse of ages, opened her creed to truths previously free, and even opposed by some of the learned and the virtuous; that is undeniable; the cause is, therefore, judged; the right does exist.

But it is remarkable that the opinion of Catholic doctors, and the practice of the Church, are strongly confirmed by reason and good sense. If, indeed, the Church can only define that which is revealed, there is no law that everything revealed must be immediately defined. What is there to hinder that luminary which God has placed in the bosom of his Church from gradually attaining its perfect radiance? . . . Why should not our dogma have, without changing its nature, its peculiar mode of growing, and developing itself? . . . What! shall it be said, *development in the immutable, and in the bosom of the unchangeable, the progress of time!* And why not? Doubtless, to impress on Catholic dogma its incommunicable character, it was requisite that that dogma should be formed at a single cast, and spring into existence complete in all its parts. But Providence has its time for all things,

and could it not postpone the full manifestation thereof? And as science was one day to reproach Catholicity with shutting up the human mind in a stationary dogma, was it not expedient to provide successive developments for our dogmatic unity, in order to show the world how it is possible to be both *immutable and progressive*? Yes, it was good to oppose to a progress vainly devised by man, the reality of Catholic progress. Philosophy has long dreamt of progress; but all the elements of progress are wanting to it. Progress must have a starting-point; where is that of philosophy? It must have a fixed terminus; where is the terminus of philosophy? It must have a law of progression; where, once more, is that of philosophy? For it, the unknown is at both ends of human developments. Fatally thrown between two mysteries, the life of humanity realizes nothing but an irregular transformation; and that progress, without beginning and without end, is but the perpetuity of destruction. It is very different with Catholic doctrine; it knows where it starts; it knows where it is to end; and its course lying between two terms immutably fixed, accomplishes the only progress that reason can approve. Ever immutable, ever substantially the same, Catholic dogma, according as it advances in time, dilates its deep bosom, and discovers more and more that treasure which has its source in the infinite. Now

it dispels the lingering shadows of the past from a truth which is to illumine the future. Now it begets at the appointed time the conclusions which spring from its eternally fruitful principles, according as the assaults of error urge it on to the development of its divine seeds. Thus dogma goes on increasing without, brightening with all the truths which God raises over his Church, growing larger and clearer in the minds of men, but never changing, never transformed. And thereby, it solves the grand problem: *Progress in immutability, and stability in motion.*

There is nothing in this theory to alarm enlightened orthodoxy. Suarez laid its solid foundations. Discussing the subject now before us, that great doctor proposes this question: "Has faith progressed in the Church, as regards certain truths which are now of faith, and in former times were not so?"¹ And after a profound examination of the truths successively added to the Catholic creed, the learned theologian concludes thus: "Thus, therefore, can the Church progress with a certainty of faith."² Moreover, Suarez is here but a faithful echo of Catholic antiquity. Vincent de Lerins professed that doctrine with a rigor and a boldness

¹ Una superest expedienda difficultas, an scilicet in Ecclesiâ Catholicâ creverit fides, quoad aliquas propositiones credendas de fide posteriori tempore, quæ antea non credebantur tanquàm de fide.

² Itâ ergo potest Ecclesia proficere etiam cum certitudine fidei.

which defied our humanitarian progress at a distance of fifteen centuries. Let us hear the philosophical challenge of that theologian, so dogmatically exact: What! it may perhaps be said, 'there is, then, no progress in the Church of Christ.' There is progress in it, and very great progress; but it is indeed *progress*, and not *change*; for, by progress, a thing increases, remaining still itself; whereas, by change, it is transformed into something else." And after having shown how the human body passes through all the phases of its development, while still retaining its identity, "even so," he continues, "must the Christian dogma, following the laws of a similar progress, strengthen with years, increase with time, rise with age, yet still incorruptible and unalterable in its integrity." And if it be asked what the holy Church meant by the dogmatical decrees of her Councils, the philosophic theologian replies: "She meant that what antiquity had simply believed, should be thenceforward believed with more precision, and that ancestral inheritance which she had received from the hands of tradition she would charge the Scripture to transmit to posterity, containing in a few words a great quantity of matter; and for the further enlightenment of mind, most frequently designating by a new word a faith which was not new."¹

¹ Forsitan dicet aliquis: Nullus-ne ergò in Ecclesiâ Christi pro-

Such is the profound yet simple theology of Vincent de Lerins; such is still the Catholic doctrine regarding development and the stability of dogma. And thus it happens to the theory of progress, as it does to every other anti-Christian doctrine: what it pursued with toil and trouble, is found in the bosom of Catholicity. In leaving us, philosophy may carry off a *word*, the *thing* remains with us. In vain does the activity of man stir up an idea that comes from us, demanding of it an unknown perfection and felicity. Whilst his wisdom perishes in the midst of his abortive works, old reality continues ever blooming in the heart of Catholicity, and calmly pursues that upward course which is to terminate in God.

fectus habebitur religionis? Habeatur planè, et maximus
sed ità tamen ut verè profectus sit ille, fidei non permutatio.
Siquidem ad profectum pertinet, ut in semetipsum unaquæque res
amplificetur; ad permutationem verò ut aliquid ex alio in aliud
transvertatur

. . . Ità etiam christianæ religionis dogma sequatur has decet
profectum regulas, ut annis scilicet consolidetur, dilatetur tem-
pore, sublimetur ætate, incorruptum tamen, illibatumque perma-
neat.

. . . Quid unquam aliud conciliorum decretis enisa est, nisi ut
quod antea simpliciter credebatur, hoc idem postea diligentius
crederetur . . . nisi ut quod prius à majoribus solà traditione
susceperat, hoc deindè posteris per scripturæ chirographum con-
signaret, magnam rerum summam paucis litteris comprehendendo,
et plerumque propter intelligentiæ lucem, non novum fidei sensum
novæ appellationis proprietate signando. (Vincent. Lirin. Com.
monit. c. XXIII.)

Thus the opinion of theologians, the practice of the Church, are confirmed by the eminently rational theory of Suarez and Vincent de Lerins. We are to conclude then that the Catholic *creed* may grow in extension, according as the Church, by her infallible authority, increases the number of truths formally *defined*, and that, consequently, a revealed truth, which never made part of the creed properly so called, may, by a providential order of things, be placed in a condition which authorizes the Holy Catholic Church to stamp it with the immutable seal of a defined dogma. Whether the belief in the Immaculate Conception of the holy Mother of God is now in this condition, is what we are about to consider.

Suarez feared not to say to the men of his age: "I affirm that this truth may be defined whenever the Church thinks proper; because the Sovereign Pontiffs Sixtus IV and Pius V, in their Constitutions, and the Fathers of Basle, in their Declaration, suppose that the controversy may be decided in both senses, and, moreover, because this truth of the supernatural order may attain such a position that the holy Church, without any new or explicit revelation, may find sufficient reasons to define it dogmatically, in virtue of a tacit and implicit revelation, sufficiently manifest."¹

¹ Dico veritatem hanc posse definiri ab Ecclesiâ, quando id expedire judicaverit . . . Nam Ecclesiam posse hanc controver-

So said Suarez, at the end of the sixteenth century, with the greatest theologians of the school. What would he say now? Does the Church now find in the new situation of the belief *sufficient motives* for affirming, by a solemn declaration, the, at least, *implicit* revelation of the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary? This is the whole question.

Doubt appears no longer possible, amid the blaze of light which now surrounds our holy belief; and Suarez in the nineteenth century would not hesitate to decide, that it may henceforward, whenever the Church pleases, take its place in the Catholic creed. A rapid glance over its theological foundations will suffice to settle all doubts.

The dogmatical definition must, we have said, rest on the *revealed* word. Let us then interrogate the sources of revelation. What says the Scripture? We must at once confess that the belief of the Immaculate Conception is not revealed therein by any direct testimony: nowhere does it present the strict formula of the doctrine. But if the Scripture alone does not carry conviction, who may deny

siam decidere apertè supponunt Sixtus IV et Pius V in suis Decretis, et idem senserunt Patris Concilii Basiliensis . . . Secundò hæc veritas est supernaturalis et potest *pervenire res ad eum statum*, in quo absque novâ et explicitâ revelatione, habeat Ecclesia motiva sufficientia ad veritatem hanc definiendam, ex implicitâ et tacitâ Dei revelatione sibi sufficienter propositâ. (In 3 S. Thom. q. 27, a. 2.)

that it strangely induces it? Can all those passages go for nothing wherein the greatest Doctors thought they perceived the mind of God? And that famous *Conteret*, if it do not of itself *finish* the demonstration, who will dare to deny that it strikingly begins it? If Mary herself were one day to fall under the dominion of Satan, what becomes of the energy of that prediction: *She shall crush thy head?* a word whose incomparable solemnity seems to foretell not only a triumph, but the plenitude, the very ideal of victory.

Is the Holy Scripture silent on this point? Even so, tradition is also the voice of God; what matter if Scripture be silent whilst tradition speaks? But does tradition indeed speak of the Immaculate Conception? Let us see. Tradition has its instruments and its witnesses; numerous instruments, and divers witnesses, who in their testimony corroborate each other, but of whom one alone would suffice to attest it. And first the holy Fathers present themselves as living echoes repeating it from age to age; let us then examine their testimony.

Do the doctors of the first centuries explicitly testify the belief of the primitive Church? Suppose they do not, no one will conclude that witnesses are wanting to tradition; tradition being able, without the holy Fathers, to accomplish its work and pursue its course. The first Fathers spoke little of the Immaculate Conception: it is

easy to conceive that the design of God was to instruct his Church by little and little; and that almost unbroken silence need not surprise us, seeing that the defenders of the faith had many more decisive questions to maintain. They did not give the precise formula of our belief: why should they, when it was the belief of all, and when no one dreamed of disturbing its peaceful reign? It is when error rises to attack, that truth, in its turn, rises to defend itself. Yes, it is on the day of its denial, that any belief whatsoever standing out from the multitude of truths tacitly admitted, and showing itself as it really is, says to the opposer: "*You deny me; well: here I am.*" As regards the doctors of the fifth century, how can we wonder to see them occupied, before all else, with the universal law of sin and the dominion of concupiscence, since they had to contend against a heresy insolently denying both one and the other, the heresy of Pelagius? There is no word of exception, when the law itself is in question. We may even add that in their vehement defence of the law, it is not difficult to suppose an *apparent* opposition to the privilege. Illustrious names have, therefore, been cited against us, and if we might believe certain men, St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, Ferrand the deacon, St. Ildefonso, and many others, were the avowed enemies of the privilege. And what was the result of the laborious investigation of their writ-

ings? What thoughts were brought to light from so many accumulated texts? *The flesh of Mary was sinful flesh; Mary was subject to that universal law which propagates original sin in all the race of Adam.* This is just what all these doctors did not fear to affirm under forms more or less severe. But, this language is only surprising to the careless or the ignorant. *The flesh of Mary was sinful flesh.* Who is ignorant that the flesh of Mary proceeded, like ours, from a corrupted source? Who is ignorant that concupiscence, often identified even with sin in the language of Scripture and of the Fathers, had its share in the formation of her virginal body? *Mary was subject to the universal law of original sin.* Could the holy Fathers say otherwise? And what is proved by their verbal proclamation of the law, when in their opinion the privilege escaped the law? Did some of the holy Fathers really mean to deny the privilege? It is difficult either to affirm or deny it with full conviction: but it is generally certain that, under these divers forms, the idea of attributing original sin to the Blessed Virgin is not to be found. Popular conviction gave a meaning to these words, and it was this: Excepting the incomparable privilege of Mary, the torrent of concupiscence brought defilement with life; and save the exception, the law of universal propagation subjected it to original sin. Besides, if the holy Fathers, defending the law of original sin, meant to exclude

Mary's privilege, Augustine's triumph must evidently have annihilated our holy belief. How then are we to account for the fact that after the defeat of Pelagius, and the solemn proclamation of the law of sin, the belief takes a flight till then unheard of? We must here make choice between two alternatives. We must either admit this simple interpretation, or otherwise take in their literal sense those formulas of the holy Fathers, and then it will not only be defilement in the conception, but also in the birth, and in the very life of the Blessed Virgin, that will spring from these texts; many of the holy Fathers pushing the boldness of their words so far.

The silence of the first Fathers of the Church would then prove nothing against Mary's privilege; neither would the apparent opposition of the doctors who came after them.

But hitherto we are in hypothesis; what says reality? Do the Fathers and the Doctors manifest only opposition towards the Immaculate Conception? Do they even observe the neutrality of silence? And has history no name to evoke, no testimony to record in favor of that holy belief? In reading over the work of Father Perrone,¹ we see pass in review before us a long array of Catholic doctors, each having a word in support of it and a

¹ It was a review of this work on the *Immaculate Conception* that gave rise to these articles of Father Felix, which appeared in four numbers of *L'Ami de la Religion*.

tribute of praise to glorify it. More than forty in turn attest this tradition, which stretches from the cradle of Christianity to the days of St. Bernard, when the banner of opposition was first raised: here we find St. Denis of Alexandria, St. Justin, St. Epiphanius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Tertullian, Origen, St. Ephraim, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, Theodore of Ancyra, St. Maximus, St. Peter Chrysologus, St. Sabbas, St. Andrew of Crete, Esychius and Theodore of Jerusalem, St. Germanus, John the Geometrician, Fulbert of Chartres, Paschase Radbert, St. John Damascene, Sophronius, St. Peter Damian, St. Anselm, St. Bruno: such are the names found amongst a crowd of less famous names and of anonymous authors.¹ Some of these testimonies suppose the Immaculate Conception, others express it in equivalent terms, others formally define it, and so by divers ways all end in the same point, the *Immaculate Conception*; and such is the energy of their words and the drift of their assertions, that if Mary knew for one instant the stain of sin, we must admit that all these men, so great by virtue, so illustrious by genius, so venerable by antiquity, have made a compact to connive at error through all time and space. Let us then venture to say with Father

¹ See pages 51-68 and 210-219 of Father Perrone's work, where the texts are quoted and discussed by the author. The narrow limits of an article will not permit us to give the quotations in detail.

Perrone: Few of the truths already inscribed in the creed, would find in variety such admirable unity of evidence.

The voice of the Fathers is not, then, silent. Had it been so, we repeat, does any one think that the tradition could come down to us? Yet there is a voice stronger, more vast in its eloquence than the voice of the doctors; it is that which speaks in prayer, resounds in hymns, and goes forth like an oracle from the depth of the sanctuary—the voice of the Liturgy. The Liturgy supposes the belief, and openly manifests it. A faithful and a magnificent translation, it does something more than render the Christian thought; it makes it shine out. And let us bear in mind that it is not the idea of one man, of one bishop, of one doctor; it is the idea of a church, often of a great nation, which glitters in the splendor of the temple. Thus, be it said in passing, great was the oversight of those who understood not that, by inaugurating new liturgies, they condemned to death the most lively witnesses of Catholic tradition, and often in one day effaced the vestiges of fifteen ages of faith. An ancient liturgy is like a man who is at once the cotemporary of the past and present; an old man, who never dies, and is there to tell the living the faith of generations passed away. Well, what is the testimony of the Liturgy? Does its life of eighteen centuries say nothing as to our present belief? Let us leave hostile erudition to pursue

conjecture and weary itself with driftless details. It is certain that liturgies, doubly respectable from their antiquity and the sanctity of their authors, assert more or less the Immaculate Conception; it is certain that even in the fifth century the East celebrated the feast of the Conception, and that in the seventh century it was there highly honored; it is also certain that in the tenth century, at the latest, the West joined the East in the celebration. It even appears incontestable, that long before that period Italy had taken the initiative, and that so early as the fifth, and even the fourth century, the belief in the Immaculate Conception was manifested with the pomp of ceremonial. We say the *Immaculate Conception*; for is it to be supposed that the Church, who honors nothing but what is holy, would have celebrated the feast of the Conception, if she had not believed in the sanctity of the Conception?

This united voice of the doctors and the liturgy, the double expression of the same thought, must have exercised a powerful influence on the belief; and God thus prepared for the Immaculate Conception the most imposing of its proofs, the unanimous consent of the clergy and the people in one common opinion, which may be regarded as that of the Church herself. The Holy Ghost, whose invisible action is everywhere present in the supernatural order, himself concurs with events to form by little and little this grand concert of truth. "Yes," says Suarez, "we must believe that this universal

concord of minds and hearts in the same faith and the same love was formed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." If you follow through the lapse of ages the career of the pious belief, how can you doubt but that God conducts it? Received at first without any formula, by I know not what Catholic instinct, you see it emerge from obscurity, slowly pierce the forms of worship as it were through a transparent veil, and even in the fifth century, such is the power and universality of its prescription, that Pelagius brings it forward against Augustine as a manifest and acknowledged fact. After that memorable struggle, after the solemn declaration which seemed as though it would annihilate it, by propounding the universal propagation of the original taint, the belief, far from perishing, appeared more vivid than ever. . . . At length the hour of contest comes in its turn. For ages long, error has been trying its impotent arms one by one against it. From the height of their thrones, the Roman Pontiffs contemplate the struggle: they strike from time to time; and it is worthy of note that, of so many blows whose wounds are still felt by the opposition, not one aims at that belief which has all the sympathy of the Church. At length, a day arrives when error has done its work . . . the belief triumphs over all . . . and ever since, not a thought denies, not a word attacks it, not a manifestation except in its favor. It is Catholicity by *fact*, the fairest prelude to Catholicity by *right*.

Thanks to Heaven, the happy day foreseen by Suarez has dawned on us. The belief in the Immaculate Conception has dispelled its final clouds, and by the light which surrounds it, the Church discovers and may proclaim it as a truth of divine revelation. We may also speak of the propriety of the glorious privilege, of its conformity with the nature of things, in the depths of man and of God. Assuredly we do not pretend to base a whole demonstration on propriety; but nevertheless it cannot be denied that great light comes from that side. Propriety may sometimes go so far as to amount to certainty, especially when it is supported by positive testimony. We all acknowledge that God has given our Mother an unequalled majesty in the creation, so that in the order of nature, as in the order of grace, Mary is the first. Now a special prerogative, an incomparable privilege in an unexampled dignity, is order; it is indeed that lofty fitness from which God does not derogate. If sanctity, preceding birth, could invest privileged souls in the maternal womb, does it not seem to you that Mary's sanctity ought to extend farther? Eve, the mother of the dead, is created in life; ought Mary, the mother of the living, to be conceived in death? Mary came into the world to deliver, to triumph with her redeeming and victorious Son; was it meet that she should commence her existence by slavery and defeat? The angels on their first appearance shone in justice; doubt-

less it was not expedient that the Queen of Angels should shine with lustre inferior to that of her subjects. But this is not all: Mary, considered with regard to God, is greater still; she enters into the most ineffable union with the Holy Trinity. The Father chose her for his daughter; as the doctors say; it was necessary, therefore, that he should make her to his own likeness, and that his sanctity should be reflected in her. The Son chose her for his mother; can it then be conceived that, free to make her all pure and brilliant, he would deny her a lustre which would reflect on himself? Lastly, the Holy Ghost said to her: *Thou art my spouse*; could the supreme Sanctifier espouse guilt? Doubtless he could sanctify his spouse before the hour of union; but were not even a remembrance of sin, a vestige of Satan, too much, a thousand times too much, in the Virgin predestined to that divine marriage? There is also a voice, then, in the divine harmonies, which seems to us to reveal that it was reasonable and proper that Mary should have been conceived *Immaculate*. But God would not commit the care of this divine truth to human reason alone; for he himself, ever since he revealed it to the world, has kept watch over it, and the word, *Mary Immaculate*, which now makes so many hearts throb, comes down to us in a tradition of eighteen centuries as a word of God, the unshaken support of the word of the Church.

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TO THE
MOST EMINENT AND REVEREND LORD
CARDINAL J. F. FRANSONI,

PREFECT OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE PROPAGANDA,
ETC., ETC., ETC.

MOST EMINENT LORD AND DEAR FRIEND :

I have long desired to give your Eminence a public proof of my sincere veneration and esteem for those great and shining virtues which win the admiration of all men. If holiness of life and profound knowledge of divine things are the two qualities which reflect the greatest lustre on a churchman, and a person invested with the most sublime dignity ; who has manifested both in a higher degree than your Eminence in the high and onerous functions which you have filled, first in Portugal, and since in Rome ; especially in the prefecture of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, judiciously confided to your vigilant care by our Holy Father Pope Gregory XVI, with his wonted appreciation of true merit ? But, conspicuous amongst all your Eminence's other virtues, the fruit of solid and sincere piety, is a tender devotion to Mary, our beloved Mother, to whom you have consecrated

the purest affections of your filial heart ; affections which are, undoubtedly, most dear and acceptable to Her. Hence it is that, having projected and now terminated a theological work on the Immaculate Conception of our great Queen, I thought I could not do better than dedicate it to your Eminence, who holds the same doctrine that I here defend, and who, moreover, has more than once urged me to undertake this work, and to have it published when brought to a close. Vouchsafe then to accept this offering, not for what it is in itself, but in consideration of the subject, which, I am sure, interests you as much as any other. You will thereby favor me with yet another proof of the friendship wherewith you have for long years honored me, and at the same time excite my warmest gratitude. With these sentiments, I will now subscribe myself,

Your Eminence's

Most humble and devoted servant,

L. CARDINAL LAMBRUSCHINI,

Bishop of Sabina.

ROME, Dec. 25th, 1842.

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A

POLEMICAL TREATISE

ON

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY.

THE subject which we are about to discuss in this brief polemical treatise, has already engaged the learned pens of some of our ablest writers. Amongst these we may mention St. Alphonso de Liguori, Cardinal Sfondrate, Suarez, the Jesuit Budrolio, Father Trombelli, the Capuchin Louis Francis d'Argentan, Federici, and many others; not to speak of the numerous body of theologians of the illustrious and deserving Order of St. Francis, who have, at all times and in all places, defended and maintained with edifying zeal that glorious privilege whereby the Mother of God was conceived without the slightest shade of original sin. If we, nevertheless, proposed, in our turn, to maintain, as far as our strength would permit, the sacred cause of our common Mother, it was not that we thought it required our aid, or that we hoped to add any thing

new to what has been already said or written by others, but because we, too, desired to present the Queen of Heaven with at least one small flower from our poor garden, as a proof of the tenderness and constancy of our filial devotion to her. Moreover, if we cannot flatter ourselves with the hope of saying any thing new, we shall, at least, present under a new form the reasons previously alleged by other authors on this subject, and we shall treat it with such order and precision that we may reasonably hope it will not be displeasing to Mary, to whom it is consecrated, and that it will also be received with kind indulgence by those of her faithful servants who may have the kindness to read it.

It is with this confidence that we enter at once upon a discussion so delicate and so important.

I.

First of all, it is necessary to define exactly the meaning of the word *conception*, and to determine its true signification in the case before us, in order to avoid the confusion of ideas which might arise from the want of a precise notion of the object to be considered

II.

CONCEPTION IS EITHER ACTIVE OR PASSIVE.

Conception is either *active*, and then there is

question of the generation of the body and its organization; or *passive*, and then it is effected when God places the soul in that body already duly formed and organized. "The word conception may be taken in a twofold sense: for it is either *active*, and then it regards the formation of the body; or it is *passive*, and then it signifies the conjunction of the rational soul with the body. For the infusion and the union with the body, rightly organized, is commonly denominated passive conception, which takes place at the very instant in which the rational soul is united to the body with all its members and organs." Thus speaks the immortal Benedict XIV, with most of the theologians.¹

III.

THE PASSIVE CONCEPTION OF MARY WAS IMMACULATE.

In saying that the conception of Mary was immaculate, we do not mean the active conception, that is to say, the generation of her blessed body;

¹ "Conceptio dupliciter accipi potest; vel enim est *activa*, in qua sancti Beatæ Virginis parentes opere maritali invicem convenientes præstiterunt ea, quæ maximè spectabant ad ipsius corporis formationem, organisationem, et dispositionem ad recipiendam animam rationalem à Deo infundendam; vel est *passiva*, cum rationalis anima cum corpore copulatur. Ipsa enim infusio, et unio cum corpore debitè organisato vulgò nominatur conceptio *passiva*, quæ scilicet fit illo ipso instanti, quo rationalis anima corpori omnibus membris ac suis organis constanti unitur."

to be conceived by a woman without the marital assistance is a privilege reserved for Jesus Christ alone. We mean only the *passive* conception, and we say that the blessed soul of the Holy Virgin, in being united to the body, was, by virtue of the sanctifying grace in which it was created, entirely preserved from contracting the least shade of original sin.

IV.

IT WAS MOST FITTING THAT MARY SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

Now, that this fair privilege was granted to Mary, who will dare to doubt? Is it at all credible that God would have permitted her to be defiled by sin—she who was destined for nothing less than to receive into her womb the precious Lily of the valley, the Object of all the prophecies, the Hope of nations, the Desired of the eternal hills, the Saviour of the world? Was it beyond his power to exempt from the common law of sin that creature so privileged, whom he loved with a special predilection, and distinguished so far as to make her the instrument of our redemption? Now, if he could do this, and that it became his own dignity to do it, what difficulty is there in admitting that he did do it, and that, applying to the Blessed Virgin by anticipation the merits of the passion and death of his beloved Son, he exempted her from the

necessity of being, even for one instant, the slave of sin, his deadly enemy? Can it be supposed that he did not bestow on Mary a greater privilege than that which was granted to Jeremiah and St. John the Baptist, sanctified in the maternal womb?

V.

THIS EXEMPTION IS PROVED BY ARGUMENTS TAKEN FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

It is true that the Divine Scriptures do not explicitly affirm that this extraordinary privilege was conceded to Mary; but it is also true that enough is said, both in the Old and New Testament, to leave sufficient room for the inference. What else could God have meant to indicate, when, cursing the angel of darkness figured by the serpent (who had induced Eve, and through her Adam, to transgress the divine precept by eating the forbidden fruit), he pronounced those remarkable words recorded in the third chapter of Genesis: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel,"—what else, I repeat, could God have meant to indicate by these words than that Mary should never be subjected to the empire of Satan? Otherwise, that is to say, if she was to have contracted the original fault, how would that perpetual enmity be verified

which was put between her and the devil, so as to secure her from every assault of the latter? Now the sacred interpreters have no doubt that this prediction refers to Mary; on the contrary, they affirm it with one accord: "By the woman (says the learned Father Tirin) is specially designated the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, bringing forth Christ for us . . . , as she became the most pure Eve, that is, mother of the living, so did she crush the head and overthrow the power of this serpent. First, because she admitted in herself none, not even original sin (the first, and, as it were, the head of all sin): Again, because she had in herself no concupiscence, or evil thought (which is the beginning or head of actual sin): Finally, because she completely overthrew and put to flight all tyrannies and heresies, the spawn and offspring of the serpent, through the power of Christ her son."¹

¹ "Per mulierem præcipuè designatur beata Virgo Maria, quæ pariendo nobis Christum . . . , ut facta est purissima Eva, id est Mater viventium: ita penitus contrivit caput et potentiam hujus serpentis. Primò quia nullum ne quidem *originale* (quod primum et quasi caput est omnium peccatorum) in se admisit. Deinde quia nullum etiam peccati fomitem, vel pravam cogitationem (quæ principium, seu caput est actualis peccati) in se habuit. Denique, quia hæreses et tyrannides omnes, per virtutem Christi seminis et filii sui, qui illius quoque semen et filii sunt, perfectè devicit et profligavit."

VI.

So also, those other words found in the fourth chapter of the Canticle of Canticles, seventh verse, "Thou art all fair, O my love; and there is not a spot in thee," why should we not say that the Holy Ghost addressed them to Mary, whom he was to fructify in the fullness of time, by his divine power, and who was thus to become his spotless spouse? It is certain that the Church herself applies them to her in her Liturgy, and that grave writers precisely see in them the privilege of her exemption from the original fault. "Therefore immaculate," says St. Jerome, quoted by Sophronius, "because corrupt in nothing."¹ Thus, if she was in no way subject to corruption, neither was she so in her first conception.

VII.

THERE IS NOTHING CONTRARY TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY TO BE DEDUCED FROM THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

Some bring forward the well-known text of St. Paul, who, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, affirms that all, without exception, die in Adam

¹ "Ideo immaculata, quia in nullo corrupta."—*Serm. de Assumptione.*

the death of sin : "In Adam all die ;" whence they conclude that as the Blessed Virgin was certainly a daughter of Adam by nature, it followed that she, like all the rest of mankind, must have been conceived in original sin. I am quite willing to admit the general law laid down by St. Paul for all the descendants of Adam ; but, I ask, could God, or could he not, according to the good pleasure of his gracious will, free Mary from that general law to which all men are subject ? If he could, and that the dignity of the Mother of the Word made man required that he should, wherefore deny that he has done it ? What ! are there not many other general laws which bind all the rest of the children of Adam, and from which Mary was undoubtedly exempted, although that exemption cannot be demonstrated by a clear and formal text of Scripture ? Thus, for instance, it is a common law that all women conceive their children in the ordinary way : the Blessed Virgin was exempt from this, as she conceived hers by the operation of the Holy Ghost. It is a common law that all women cease to be virgins in becoming mothers : the Blessed Virgin was not subject to that law, since she is a Virgin Mother, who lost nothing of her virginal purity by bringing forth the Son of God ; that purity became perfect in her, *because* of her child-bearing. It is a general law that all mothers bring forth with pain : "In sorrow shalt thou bring

forth:" the Blessed Virgin was freed from this law, for St. Thomas says expressly that on the contrary she experienced the greatest joy in giving birth to her divine Son: "In the Virgin's parturition there was no pain, but the greatest joy."¹ It is a common law that every child of Adam is subject to some actual sin: such was not the case with the Blessed Virgin, the general belief of the Church being that she never committed an actual sin in the whole course of her life. It is a general law that all human bodies are reduced to dust after their death: well! the Blessed Virgin did not undergo that rigorous punishment, seeing that, after her death, her body having remained three days in the tomb, she arose as did Jesus Christ, and was triumphantly received into heaven on the day of her Assumption. Now, I say, if it be a Catholic opinion, undisputed by any one, that the Blessed Virgin was exempted from so many other general laws, common to the rest of mankind, what difficulty is there in admitting that God also exempted her from that of original sin, which universally affects all the posterity of Adam? The contrary opinion appears to me so repugnant to the sublime dignity of Mother of God, that I think it ought to be regarded as theologically absurd.

¹ "In partu Virginis nullus fuit dolor, sed maxima jucunditas."
—III p. q. 35.

VIII.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT INCLINES TO OUR OPINION.

Influenced, as we believe, by this grave reflection, the Fathers of the Council of Trent showed themselves, not only disposed, but at one time, actually resolved to decide the present question according to the proposition of the saintly Cardinal Pacheco; nevertheless, certain weighty considerations, together with the love of peace, determined the holy assembly to stop at the terms contained in the Decree "On Original Sin," reported in the Fifth Session of the same Council. Here are the words of the learned and exact Cardinal Pallavicini, in his History of the Council of Trent, b. VII. ch. vii.: "Besides the discussions on discipline, they carefully examined the decrees for the definition of dogmas on original sin; and as Pacheco urged the Fathers, from the very beginning, to define the question concerning the Mother of God, it was thought that he artfully proposed a subject too difficult to be decided by the next session. But it afterwards appeared that he was actuated by a sincere devotion to the Blessed Virgin. There had lately arrived two theologians of his own nation, sent to the Council by the Pope, Diego Lainez and Alphonso Salmeron; the former of whom especially, as we find in the ancient memoirs of our

company, spoke often and eloquently in favor of Pacheco's opinion. In a general congregation held on the 8th of June, the Decree on original sin being read, as had been agreed upon in the private meetings, Pacheco, seeing that a definitive decision on this point could not be obtained in the few remaining days, required that to the general proposition which declared that sin common to all men, these words should be added: "With respect to the Blessed Virgin, the holy Council defines nothing, although piously believing that she was conceived without original sin." The greater part of the Fathers then adopted his opinion; but the bishops belonging to the Order of St. Dominic, and the other members of that Order present at the Council, warmly opposed it, and gained over some to their party by alleging that if one of the two opinions were declared pious, the contrary opinion was, of course, declared impious; which was tacitly defining the question. They, consequently, advised the adoption of terms prejudicial to neither of the two opinions, so that both might remain as they then were in the Church. With this intention, the Decree was drawn up at the meetings of the theologians in the following terms: "The holy Council declares that, in this Decree, where there is question of original sin, it does not intend to include the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ, and means to declare no-

thing more on that subject than what has been decreed by Sixtus IV of happy memory."

This did not satisfy Cardinal de Jaen. He asserted that, in the preceding Congregation, more than two-thirds had consented to add the words, "of whom it is piously believed that she was conceived without original sin."

"It cannot be denied," he added, "that this opinion is conformable to piety, for not only do all the regular orders, except one, and all the academies adhere to this belief, as the most pious, but the Church also celebrates with a solemn rite the feast of the Conception." The Legates were divided in opinion; for Cardinal del Monte professed his belief in the Immaculate Conception; Massarello relates of Cervin that he held the contrary opinion; with regard to Pole, I have no data by which to judge; it is, however, certain that all three were desirous to prevent discussions amongst Catholic *parties*, and to make use of no expressions that could give any of them an advantage over the others. Cervin stated that if, at the last meeting, something had been said by the bishops on this point, it was not said at the request of the Legates, nor in the form required for decrees; that, in the preceding Congregation of the 28th May, it had been resolved that there should be no decision given on this controversy, or neither of the opinions called in question. He added that, if the proposed

formula was considered hurtful to either, it might be changed ; but that, on the other hand, it would be inexpedient to introduce another, whereby some might obtain indirectly what the Council refused to grant directly. Then the Bishop of Astorga proposed the suppression of that clause where it was said that the Council meant to declare nothing at present ; his object was, in my opinion, to have it, at least, remain declared that the Virgin is not necessarily included in the general affirmation of the original sin contracted by all men, and that, consequently, the arguments brought forward in support of the contrary opinion might not render her exemption less probable.

“ Bertano and the other Dominicans applauded this proposition, as is usual with those who escape the greater danger ; but Cardinal Pacheco and his adherents were not satisfied. Meanwhile the opinions were again taken, and that session was of unusual length. The conclusion was that, although the majority believed the Conception really immaculate, nevertheless the majority judged it expedient to withhold any formal rejection of the contrary opinion. Hence it was that the words of the Decree were arranged according to the revisal of the Bishop of Astorga, to the great regret of Pacheco.”¹

¹ Any one desirous of more ample details on the history of this Decree may read Father Strozzi's "*Controversy on the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*;" and Father Piazza in his Discourse,

IX.

DECLARATION OF THE COUNCIL.

It really occurred, as Pallavicini relates, since the holy Council, after having formally established in its decree the dogma of the transmission of original sin to all the descendants of Adam, added thereto this important clause: "However, this same holy Synod declares that, in this decree, in which it treats of original sin, it has no intention to include the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God; but that the Constitutions of Pope Sixtus IV, of happy memory, are to be observed under the penalties comprised in said Constitutions, which it hereby renews."¹

X.

THE DECLARATION OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT CONFIRMS THE OPINION
THAT MARY WAS EXEMPT FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

Two things are clearly to be deduced from the

"Immaculatæ Conceptionis Matris Dei Maria," quoted by the erudite Abbé Zaccaria, in his notes on Pallavicini. The latter of these fully refutes Launoy and Dupin, declared enemies of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

¹ "Declarat tamen hæc ipsa sancta Synodus non esse sue intentionis comprehendere in hoc Decreto, ubi de peccato originali agitur, Beatam et Immaculatam Virginem Mariam Dei Genitricem; sed observandas esse Constitutiones felicis recordationis Sixti Papæ IV, sub pænis in ejus Constitutionibus contentis, quas innovat."

foregoing history and the portion of the decree which we have given, viz.: 1st, that the chief and most notable part of those venerable Fathers appeared to be persuaded that the Blessed Virgin was exempt from original sin, and were even disposed to publish a solemn definition to that effect; had it not been that, as Pallavicini shows, their desire to avoid all occasion of discord at that particular time, together with other prudential motives, induced them to adopt, instead of that definition, a middle course, in order to promote peace: 2d, that these Fathers, nevertheless, did solemnly declare that they had no intention to include in their decree on original sin, the most Blessed Virgin, the true Mother of God. Now, was not this form of expression equivalent to a formal exception of Mary, on the part of the Fathers of Trent? Otherwise, how could they have said that they had no intention of including her in their decree on original sin? What meaning has the phrase, "She is not included in it," if not precisely this, "She is excluded from it"? Thus, following the spirit and the letter of the text quoted, it must be concluded that it was the opinion of the Fathers of Trent that Mary, in her conception, was exempted and preserved from original sin. This opinion of the Fathers of Trent is further attested by the title of *Immaculate* given to the Blessed Virgin in their declaration, seeing that the meaning they assigned

to that word and the sense in which they used it, was fixed by the nature of the stain treated of in the decree: the question was of original, and not of actual sin; hence, in styling Mary the *Immaculate*, it was their intention to say that she was not conceived in original sin.

XI.

THE OPPONENTS OF THE DOCTRINE SEEK IN VAIN FOR A RENEWAL OF THE CONSTITUTIONS OF SIXTUS IV, ATTRIBUTING TO THE DECLARATION A MEANING CONTRARY TO THAT PIOUS OPINION.

It will be said that the Council of Trent, in this same declaration, renewed the two famous Constitutions of Sixtus IV, who, under pain of excommunication, prohibited either of the two parties to preach, write, or teach that it was sinful and heretical to maintain the contrary opinion. But what does that prove? Nothing more than this, that the holy Council declined giving any decision on the subject. Now, this is a fact which we do not deny. But even so, does it in any degree weaken our interpretation of the favor wherewith the Fathers, with few exceptions, regarded the opinion that Mary was absolutely exempt from original sin? Certainly not; especially as in one of the Constitutions of Sixtus IV, confirmed and renewed by the Fathers of Trent, that sovereign pontiff, after having said: "We deem it meet, or rather due,

that all the faithful of Christ give praise and thanks to Almighty God for the admirable conception of the same Immaculate Virgin, and that they say and assist at the masses and other divine offices appointed for that purpose in the Church of God," immediately opens the treasures of the Church for the benefit of the faithful "of both sexes, who, on the day of the festival of the Conception of the same Virgin Mary, and during its Octave, shall devoutly celebrate and recite the mass and office of the Conception of the same glorious Virgin, or assist at these canonical hours, as often as they shall do so, they may obtain the very same indulgence and remission of sins, as, according to the Constitutions of Urban IV, of happy memory, approved in the Council of Vienna, and of Martin V, and other Roman pontiffs, our predecessors, they obtain, who celebrate and recite Mass and the Canonical Hours on the feast of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from the first vespers, and during its octave, according to the Constitution of the Roman Church, or will assist at such Mass, Office, and Hours."¹ Thus every one sees that great favors are accorded to this feast; and the

¹ "Dignum, quin potius debitum reputamus, universos Christi fideles, ut omnipotenti Deo de ipsius immaculatæ Virginis mira Conceptione gratias et laudes referant, et instituta propterea in Ecclesia Dei Missas et alia divina Officia dicant, et illis intersint utriusque sexûs, qui Missam et Officium Conceptionis

very fact of its being placed on a level with *Corpus Christi* and its Octave, clearly shows how it was regarded by the Holy See; neither let us forget that the Constitutions of Sixtus IV were in each of their parts confirmed and renewed by the Council of Trent. We are then to conclude that, if the Fathers of that Council, for the reasons assigned by Cardinal Pallavicini, abstained from defining the question of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, on the other hand, their own declaration shows that it was their intention to favor our opinion in preference to the other, although they did not openly condemn the latter.

XII.

DEFINITION OF THE COUNCIL OF BASLE, ADOPTED BY THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL OF AVIGNON.

Long before the Council of Trent, that of Basle had, in the most explicit terms, declared the doc-

ejusdem Virginis gloriosæ in die festivitatis Conceptionis ejusdem Virginis Mariæ, et per Octavas ejus, devotè celebraverint et dixerint, aut illis Horis canonicis interfuerint, quoties id fecerint, eandem prorsus indulgentiam et peccatorum remissionem consequantur, quam juxta felicis recordationis Urbani IV, in Concilio Viennensi approbatæ, ac Martini V et aliorum Romanorum Pontificum prædecessorum Nostrorum Constitutiones, consequuntur illi, qui Missam et Horas Canonicas in Festo Corporis et Sanguinis Domini Nostri Jesu Christi à primis Vesperis, et per illius Octavas, juxta Romanæ Ecclesiæ constitutionem celebrant, dicunt, aut Missæ, Officio, et Horis hujusmodi intersunt."

trine of the spotless conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "as pious and in harmony with ecclesiastical worship, Catholic faith, right reason, and holy Scripture, and to be approved, held, and embraced by all Catholics,"¹ so that it was "unlawful for any one to maintain or to preach the contrary."² This definition was afterwards renewed by a Provincial Council of Avignon, quoted even by Benedict XIV in his work, before referred to, *de Festis Sanctorum*. This was no fault to the Council of Avignon, because the doctrine was true, although it had been defined as of faith by a Council which had ceased to be legitimate, and had become, on the contrary, a regular conventicle. In fact, it was adopted not only by a great number of theologians, Italian, French, German, Polish, Flemish, English, Scotch, Spanish, Portuguese, and Oriental; but also by many academies and universities, especially that of Paris, which, in 1496, hesitated not to oblige its members, by the sanctity of an oath, to defend it, under pain of being expelled from the university, and forfeiting its grades and privileges.³

The same university, which then contained many

¹ "Tanquam piam et consonam cultui ecclesiastice, fidei Catholicæ, rectæ rationi, et sacræ Scripturæ ab omnibus Catholicis approbandam, tenendam et amplectendam."

² "Nulli de cætero licitum esse in contrarium prædicare et docere."

³ The following is the substance of the statute drawn up by these

learned men, went so far as to declare that it professed as of faith the doctrine which affirms that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without the least shade of original sin.

doctors: "We, being all assembled together the third time, after much grave and mature deliberation, have bound and pledged ourselves by a special oath to defend and maintain that most pious doctrine which declares the blessed Mother of God to have been preserved from original sin by a special privilege of God; which doctrine we have long believed and do still believe true; decreeing that henceforth no one can be enrolled in this sacred college unless he profess, by the same oath, that to the best of his ability he will be a strenuous supporter and defender of this religious doctrine. But if, which Heaven forbid! any one of us, going over to the enemies of the Virgin, shall in any manner dare to favor the contrary assertion, which we deem false, impious, and erroneous, despising not only our authority, but that of the Synod and the Church, which is, undoubtedly, the highest, him we decree to be stript of our honors and driven from our society as a heathen and a publican."

"Universi tertio congregati post multam, gravem et maturam deliberationem, in ejus piissimæ doctrinæ, quæ benedictissimam Dei Matrem ab originali peccato, Dei singulari dono, fuisse præservatam affirmat; quamque jampridem veram credidimus et credimus, defensionem et propugnationem speciali sacramento conjurabimus nosque devovimus; statuentes ut nemo deinceps sacro huic nostro Collegio adscribatur, nisi de hujus religiosæ doctrinæ assertorem, strenuumque propugnatorem semper pro viribus futurum simili juramento profiteatur. Quod si quis ex nostris, quod absit, ad hostes Virginis transfuga, contrariæ assertionis, quam falsam, impiam et erroneam judicamus, spretâ non nostrâ tantum, sed Synodi et Ecclesiæ, quæ procul dubio summa est, auctoritate, patrocinium quacumque ratione suscipere ausus fuerit, hunc honoribus nostris privatum atque exauctoratum à nobis et consortio nostro, velut ethnicum et publicanum, procul abjiciendum decernimus."

XIII.

HOW THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFFS FAVORED THE OPINION OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY.

Above all, it must be remembered that the Roman Pontiffs, far from having ever rejected or opposed our opinion, on the contrary, favored and protected it. Sixtus IV, in the Constitution of 1476, already cited, and commencing with the words: "*Cum præcelsa meritorum insignia*," not only granted indulgences to those who profess devotion to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, but prescribed in her honor the Mass and Office with this prayer: "O God, who, by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, hast prepared a fit dwelling for thy Son; grant, we beseech thee, that as, through the foreseen death of the Son of this same Virgin, thou hast preserved her from all stain, so we also may by her intercession come pure to thee."¹ This prayer was used in the Catholic Church for nearly a century, that is, from the pontificate of Sixtus IV to that of Pius V. It is true, however, that, in the course of the year 1568, that Pontiff suppressed the office of the Conception, printed and published under Sixtus

¹ "*Cum præcelsa meritorum insignia Deus, qui per Immaculatam Virginis Conceptionem dignum Filio tuo habitaculum præparasti; concede, quæsumus, ut sicut, ex morte ejusdem Filii sui prævisa, eam ab omni labe præservasti, ita nos quoque mundos ejus intercessione, ad Te pervenire concedas.*"

IV, restricting to the Franciscans the power of reciting it. He took this step, not because there was any thing objectionable in the office, but simply because he wished to prescribe for the whole Church a uniform mode of public prayer; for there were then divers offices for the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, for instance, that of Leonard de Bussis, of Francis Quignonez, of Robert Gaguin and others. The Pontiff thought proper to choose from amongst so many offices that of the Abbé Helsin, according to the rite and form established in the office of the Nativity, merely substituting the word *Conception* for that of *Nativity*. From this we must conclude that St. Pius V in no way impeded the devotion to the Immaculate Conception, but rather promoted it. The fact is, that, as the Church, in the feast of the Nativity, does not celebrate the sanctification of Mary, let it take place when it might, but merely solemnizes her Nativity as holy; so, in the feast of the Conception she does not celebrate the sanctification, but venerates as holy and immaculate the Conception of the Blessed Virgin. And we must here observe, that it was just St. Pius V who, in the Roman Breviary and in the Ecclesiastical Calendar, established as a precept for the whole Church, the feast of the Conception of Mary; a feast which proves, it seems to me, that that holy Pontiff favored the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

XIV.

PROHIBITION TO SPEAK AGAINST THE OPINION THAT MARY WAS EX-
EMPT FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

In the year 1616, Paul V, under the penalties and censures contained in the Constitutions of Sixtus IV, forbade any one, in public preachings, lessons, conclusions or any other public act whatsoever, to dare to affirm that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin. And as it happened in a few years after, that is in 1622, that scandals and dissensions arose in Christendom because of the contrary opinion, Gregory XV immediately renewed the Decree of Paul V, and extended it equally to writings and private discourses: "ordering and commanding all and each of the abovenamed not to attempt to assert in future, that the same most Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin, until such article shall have been defined by the Apostolic See; or until it shall be otherwise ordained by His Holiness and the Apostolic See; not even in sermons or private writings, nor in any manner to act or treat concerning this affirmative opinion, those, however, excepted, to whom it shall be otherwise specially allowed, in this matter, by the Holy Apostolic See."¹ He afterwards permits

¹ "Mandans et præciens omnibus, et singulis supradictis, ne de cætero, donec articulus hujusmodi a Sede Apostolica definitus,

the Dominican Fathers, by his Indult of the 28th July of the same year, "to discuss freely in private discourse, or in conferences amongst themselves, but not with others, the doctrine of the same Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, without incurring any of the penalties contained in the said Decrees."¹ He, at the same time, ordained and prescribed, under the heaviest penalties, that all and every ecclesiastic should make use of no other word than that of *Conception*, either in reciting the divine Office or in celebrating Mass, either in public or in private. And that, because some had substituted for the word *Conception* that of *Sanctification*; whereby they showed that they did not venerate the *animation* of the Blessed Virgin, but, on the contrary, her *purification* from original sin by means of sanctifying grace.

vel per Sanctitatem suam, et Sedem Apostolicam fuerit aliter ordinatum, neque etiam in sermonibus et scriptis privatis audeant asserere, quod EADEM Beatissima Virgo fuerit concepta cum peccato originali, nec de hac opinione affirmativa aliquo modo agere, seu tractare, exceptis tamen, quibus à Sancta Sede Apostolica fuerit aliter super his specialiter indultum."

¹ "Ut in quibuscumque privatis eorum colloquiis, seu conferentiis inter se dumtaxat, et non inter alios, aut cum aliis, de materia ejusdem Conceptionis B. M. V. disserere et tractare absque ullo pœnarum, in dictis decretis contentarum, incursu, liberè et licitè possint."

XV.

THE OPINION FAVORABLE TO MARY'S PRIVILEGE MAY ALONE BE MAINTAINED, EITHER IN PUBLIC OR IN PRIVATE.

It results from the Decree of Gregory XV that the contrary opinion was banished from amongst men, and that it was forbidden to manifest itself in any way either public or private, verbally or in writing; so that the pious opinion alone might be promulgated, either in public or private, verbally or in writing, always and in every place. Thus, the former opinion, that is to say, that which denies the exemption of the Blessed Virgin from original sin, has been condemned to the most rigorous silence, because it has been found irreconcilable with ecclesiastical tradition and Christian piety.

XVI.

ALEXANDER VII RENEWS AND CONFIRMS THE CONSTITUTIONS OF HIS PREDECESSORS IN FAVOR OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

At length Alexander VII followed the example of his predecessors, in his Constitution "Solicitude omnium Ecclesiarum," published in the year 1661. He expresses himself in these terms: "We considering . . . and wishing, after the example of the Roman Pontiffs, our predecessors, to foster this laudable piety and devotion, festival and homage rendered to her in the Roman Church, and never

changed since the institution of the worship itself, likewise to protect this piety and devotion towards the Blessed Virgin preserved (the grace indeed of the Holy Ghost preventing) from original sin We renew and command to be observed, under the censures and penalties contained therein, the constitutions and decrees issued by the Roman Pontiffs our predecessors, and particularly by Sixtus IV, Paul V, and Gregory XV, in favor of the opinion which asserts that the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary was, in its creation and infusion into the body, endowed with the grace of the Holy Ghost, and preserved from original sin ; and also in favor of the feast of, and devotion to the Conception of the same Virgin Mother of God, tendered in accordance with this pious opinion, as stated above."¹

¹ "Solicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum" "Nos considerantes . . . volentesque laudabili huic pietati, et devotioni, et Festo, et cultui secundum illam exhibito in Ecclesia Romana, post ipsius cultus institutionem numquam immutato, Romanorum Pontificum Prædecessorum nostrorum exemplo fovere, necnon tueri pietatem et devotionem hanc colendi et celebrandi, Beatissimam Virginem, præveniente scilicet Spiritûs Sancti gratiâ, à peccato originali præservatam ; . . . Constitutiones et Decreta à Romanis Pontificibus prædecessoribus nostris, et præcipuè à Sixto IV, Paulo V, Gregorio XV, edita in favorem sententiæ asserentis animam B. Mariæ Virginis in sua creatione et in corpus infusione, Spiritûs Sancti gratiâ donatam, et à peccato originali præservatam fuisse, necnon in favorem Festi, et cultus Conceptionis ejusdem Virginis Deiparæ secundum piam istam sententiam, ut præfertur, exhibiti, innovamus, et sub censuris et pœnis in iisdem Constitutionibus contentis, observari mandamus."

XVII.

From all these acts of the Sovereign Pontiffs, acts so solemn and so explicit, (while there is not one posterior act to be found in favor of the contrary opinion,) it is manifest that the Holy Apostolic See, or rather the entire Church, has always shown, and still does show itself, disposed to favor the doctrine which maintains that Mary has been exempted from original sin, although she has not yet made it an article of faith.¹

XVIII.

JUDGMENT OF THE HOLY FATHERS ON THE PRESENT QUESTION — THE SILENCE OF THE TWO FIRST CENTURIES IS BY NO MEANS INIMICAL TO THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, BUT ON THE CONTRARY SUPPOSES IT.

We have now to ascertain what was thought of this matter by the Holy Fathers who have transmitted to us the sacred tradition of the Church, and whose authority must ever be invoked in all questions of ecclesiastical discipline and Catholic faith. Now, we are free to confess that the two first ages of the Church are entirely silent on the point of

¹ Most of our readers are aware that this work was written several years ago. It is sad to think that the pious Cardinal did not live to witness the solemn declaration of the Immaculate Conception. May we not hope that he shares Mary's triumph in heaven since he was deprived of that consolation on earth?—*Translator.*

which we treat. But that silence, very far from invalidating our doctrine, proves, on the contrary, that it was then professed and universally adopted. During those two centuries, Mary was venerated by all with a particular devotion, and regarded as highly privileged, by reason of her sublime quality of Mother of God, and that she had never had an equal in plenitude of grace. If her exemption from original sin had been only called in question by some Doctor, assuredly, others would have taken up the defence, and the writings of those two centuries would present some indication of the fact; but there is neither trace nor record of any such discussion: therefore, the silence of the two first ages of the Church is rather favorable to the belief in the Immaculate Conception, as it leaves room to suppose it.

XIX.

DOCUMENT WHICH JUSTIFIES THAT SUPPOSITION.

This supposition is, moreover, founded on a document of considerable importance, viz., the well-known letter of the Priests and Deacons of Achaïa, in which is related the martyrdom of the glorious apostle St. Andrew, and the discourse pronounced by him before his passion, in presence of the proconsul Egeus. In this discourse, the holy apostle thus spoke: "And, therefore, because the first

man was created of immaculate earth, it was necessary that of an immaculate virgin should be born that perfect man, by whom the Son of God (who first formed man) was to restore that eternal life which men had lost."¹ This comparison of the virgin earth shows us Mary immaculate in her very origin, even as was the earth of which the first man was formed, before God had as yet said to Adam: "Cursed is the earth in thy work."² This document was at first considered spurious, or at least doubtful, because it was in Latin, and no Greek copy known; but, since the latter was found in the Bodleian Library, and published by Charles Christian Woog, a Protestant writer, all doubt has ceased, so that the celebrated Morcelli made no difficulty of inserting it as true and authentic in his *Calendar of the Church of Constantinople*, under the date of the 30th November. It would follow, then, from this document, that the belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary was professed by the faithful, even in the two first ages of the Church, and that it is supported by clear apostolic testimony.

¹ "Et propterea, quod ex immaculatâ terrâ creatus fuerat primus homo, necesse erat ut ex immaculatâ Virgine nasceretur perfectus homo, quo Filius Dei, qui antè condiderat hominem, vitam æternam quam perdiderant homines, repararet."

² Gen. iii. 17.

XX.

ORIGEN ADMITS THE FAIR PRIVILEGE OF MARY.

Let us now pass on to the third century. Then appeared Origen, who, not in an apologetic manner (for no one raised a doubt on the subject), but naturally and without discussion, expressed himself, with regard to Mary, in such a manner that we can clearly infer from his words that he thought of the privilege of the Blessed Virgin precisely what we ourselves do. Here is how he states his opinion in the Homily VI in *Lucam*: "But because the angel saluted Mary by a new form of expression, wholly unprecedented in the Scripture, there are a few words to be said on the subject. For his salutation, *Ave gratiâ plena*, which in Greek is *Κεχαριτωμένη*, I cannot remember reading such another in any part of the Scripture; neither is it here addressed to a man. For Mary alone is this salutation reserved. If Mary had known that a similar salutation was ever made to any one else (she being well acquainted with the written law, and with all the predictions of the prophets) the salutation would never have alarmed her as it did."¹ Now, the

¹ "Quia verò Angelus novo sermone Mariam salutavit, quem in omni Scripturâ invenire non potui, et de hoc pauca dicenda sunt. Id enim quod ait *Ave gratiâ plena*, quod græcè dicitur *Κεχαριτωμένη*, ubi in Scripturis alibi legerim non recorder; sed neque ad virum

Greek word *Κεχαρισμένη*, not only signifies *full of grace*, according to the Vulgate, but may also signify *formed in grace*. That Origen gave precisely that meaning to the Greek word in question, is clearly manifested in his First Homily, cited by St. Alphonso de Liguori, where he speaks thus of Mary: "Neither was she infected by the breath of the poisonous serpent."¹ If, then, Origen thought that the wicked serpent, that is to say, the devil, never attacked Mary, not even with his pestilential breath, we must necessarily conclude that Origen considered Mary exempt from original sin.

XXI.

THE GREEK LITURGY AND MENOLOGIES CONFIRM OUR DOCTRINE.

We have next the Liturgy of the Greek Church, reported by Lebrun,² and much more ancient than St. John Chrysostom, wherein Mary is styled "in all respects blameless;"³ which sufficiently indicates that that Church believed her conceived without the original fault.

istiusmodi sermo est *Salve gratia plena*. Soli Mariæ hæc salutatio servatur. Si enim scivisset Maria et ad alium quempiam similem factum esse sermonem, habebat quippe legis scientiam, et erat sancta, et prophetarum vaticinia quotidianâ meditatione cognoverat; numquam quasi peregrina eam salutatio terruisset."

¹ "Nec serpentis venenosi afflatibus infecta est."

² T. iv. p. 408.

³ "Omni ex parte inculpata."

And before Lebrun, Father Wangnereck, a Jesuit, in his cradle work entitled: *Pietas Mariana Græcorum*, printed at Munich, by Wagner, in 1647, collected many passages from the oldest Greek Menologies wherein Mary is styled, now "free from all blemish,"¹ now as the only one who has escaped the spiritual death of original sin, now as "Her who was formed pure from all eternity,"² and again as "the only one who was worthy from all eternity to become the mother of God."³ This work, now very rare, and only made known to us after our own was considerably advanced, elicited the highest praise from two learned cardinals, Baronius and Sirlet, not to speak of the Bollandists who held it in the greatest esteem.

XXII.

THE FATHERS OF THE FOURTH CENTURY ARE FAVORABLE TO THE PIOUS
OPINION THAT MARY WAS EXEMPT FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

In the fourth century, we must quote Amphilacus, bishop of Icona, who, in his fourth Discourse in *S. Deiparam*, says that God formed the Virgin "without sin and without stain."⁴

St. Ambrose, in his Treatise on the 118th Psalm,

¹ "Omni nævo intacta."

² "Ab æterno munda fuisse dignoscitur."

³ "Sola ab æterno digna quæ Deipara fieret."

⁴ "Sine macula et sine peccato."

commenting on the seventh verse, calls her "a virgin freed by grace from every stain of sin."¹ Here, certainly, the holy Doctor makes no distinction between actual and original sin; therefore, according to him, Mary was also exempt from the latter: otherwise he could not speak of her as free from every stain of sin.

St. Epiphanius, who died in the year 403, expresses himself thus in his Opusculum *De Laudibus Virginis*: "She was superior to all beings, God alone excepted; more beautiful by nature than the Cherubim, the Seraphim, and all the angelic host, . . . the immaculate sheep who brought forth Christ the Lamb."²

XXIII.

FAMOUS TESTIMONY OF ST. JEROME IN FAVOR OF OUR DOCTRINE.

Let us continue the chain of the Fathers. St. Jerome, a Doctor of great authority, commenting on the 77th Psalm, and explaining the words: "He conducted them with a cloud by day," thus speaks: "Behold the Lord cometh into Egypt in a light cloud. The light cloud we must understand, either as properly signifying the body of the

¹ "Virgo per gratiam ab omni integra labe peccati."

² "Solo Deo excepto, cunctis superior extitit, naturâ formosior est ipsis Cherubim, Seraphim, et omni exercitu Angelorum, . . . ovis immaculata, quæ peperit Agnum Christum."

Saviour, as being light and burdened with no sin : or we may certainly take the light cloud as signifying Holy Mary. . . . Behold the Lord cometh into the Egypt of this world on a light cloud, which is the Virgin. 'And he conducted them with a cloud by day.' He said beautifully *by day*, for that cloud was never in darkness, but always in light."¹ Now if, according to the doctrine of St. Epiphanius, after God comes Mary, whose nature is fairer and more noble than the angelic nature itself; and if the Blessed Virgin was, according to St. Jerome, prefigured by that light cloud foretold by the prophet which was always in light and never in darkness, it is quite evident that both these great Doctors believed Mary exempt from original sin; for if that sin could have defiled her even for an instant, how could it be verified in her that she was "never in darkness, but always in light"?

¹ *Et deduxit eos in nube diei.* "Ecce Dominus venit Ægyptum in nebulâ levi. Nubem levem, aut propriè Salvatoris corpus debemus accipere, quia leve fuit, et nullo peccato prægravatum: aut certè nubem levem debemus sanctam Mariam accipere, nullo semine humano prægravatam. Ecce Dominus venit in Ægyptum sæculi istius super nubem levem, Virginem. *Et deduxit eos in nube diei.* Pulchrè dixit *diei*; *nubes enim illa non fuit in tenebris, sed semper in luce.*"

XXIV.

IMPORTANT TESTIMONY OF ST. AUGUSTINE ON THE SUBJECT.

But let us now come to the doctrine of St. Augustine, so much abused by those who favor the contrary opinion. That great Doctor (who may be considered as the organ and interpreter of all the Fathers who preceded him), refuting Pelagius, who affirmed that all the children of baptized parents are born free from original sin, expresses himself thus : "Except, therefore, the Holy Virgin Mary, *whom, through respect for the Lord, I will not suffer to be named when there is question of sin*; for, do we not know that, in order to conquer sin entirely, a fullness of grace has been conferred on her who merited to bear Him who, it is certain, had no sin? This Virgin, then, being excepted, could we assemble all those saints (viz., those of the old law), when they lived here on earth, and ask them if they were without sin, what would be their answer? would it be what this man says, or what St. John the Apostle said? I ask you, if they could be questioned on this point (however great might have been their sanctity while in the body), would they not all cry out with one accord: 'If we say we have not sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'?"¹

¹ "Exceptâ itaque sanctâ Virgine Mariâ, de quâ, propter honorem Domini, nullam prorsus, cum de peccatis agitur, haberi volo quæ-

XXV.

THE WORD "RENASCENDI" EMPLOYED BY THE HOLY DOCTOR IS NOT
AT ALL FAVORABLE TO THE CONTRARY OPINION.

And Julian having made this objection: "Thou dost transfer Mary herself to the devil by the condition of birth,"¹ as if the holy Doctor had said that Mary also, by the condition of nature, must have been born subject to the devil, he immediately replied in these terms: "We do not transfer Mary to the devil by the condition of birth; for that condition itself is dissolved by the grace of regeneration;"² the meaning of these words is that Mary was exempted from original sin by virtue of a special grace which preserved her from it. The word regeneration (*renascendi*) cannot be opposed to this sense, as though the holy Doctor

tionem; unde enim scimus quod ei plus gratiæ collatum fuerit *ad vincendum omni ex parte peccatum*, quæ concipere ac parere meruit quem constat nullum habuisse peccatum? Hæc ergo Virgine exceptâ, si omnes illos Sanctos, et Sanctas, cùm hic viverent congregare possemus, et interrogare utrum essent sine peccato, quid fuisse responsuros putamus, utrum hoc, quod iste dicit, an quod Joannes Apostolus? Rogo vos, quantalibet fuerint in hoc corpore excellentia sanctitatis, si de hoc interrogari potuissent, nonne unâ voce clamarent: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos decipimus, et veritas in nobis non est?"

¹ "Tu ipsam Mariam diabolo nascendi conditione transcribis."

² "Non transcribimus Mariam diabolo conditione nascendi; sed ideo, quia ipsa conditio solvitur gratiâ renascendi." (Op. imp. contra Julianum, lib. IV, p. 122.)

meant to indicate that Mary escaped the slavery of the devil by means of purification from sin; since it is clear, from the context of the whole discourse, that St. Augustine spoke against Julian precisely with reference to the conception that we call *passive*, declaring Mary's Conception immaculate from the *first* moment, as the schools say, and not from the *second*. That such was the real intention of St. Augustine, clearly results from his XIIth Sermon *In Natali Domini*, where we find these precise words: "The Church, like Mary, has *perpetual integrity* and incorrupt fruitfulness. For that which Mary merited in the flesh, the Church preserved in the spirit; the only difference is that the former bore one, the latter many."¹ Here, the holy Doctor institutes a comparison between Mary and the Church; he says that the purity of the one was equal to that of the other, and that purity was perpetual, "perpetual integrity:" hence, according to St. Augustine, there was not a single moment in which Mary, like the Church, was not perfectly pure and undefiled: therefore, the holy Doctor excludes Mary from the defilement of original sin; and, consequently, in the text cited above, the word *regeneration* can have no other meaning than that which we have given it.

¹ "Ecclesiae, sicut Mariæ, *perpetua integritas* et incorrupta fecunditas. Quod enim illa meruit in carne, hæc servavit in mente, nisi quod illa peperit unum, hæc parit multos."

XXVI.

THOSE PASSAGES WHEREIN THE HOLY DOCTOR AFFIRMS THAT ORIGINAL SIN WAS TRANSMITTED TO ALL MEN, DO NOT INCLUDE THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

If, in other places in his works, he seems to affirm the contrary, as when, in his Epistle to Optat, *De Origine Animarum*, he says in general: "That no one is born of Adam unbound by the chain of sin and damnation, and that no one is delivered therefrom unless by regeneration through Christ;"¹ and in the second book of his *Baptismo Parvulorum*: "There is not amongst the sons of men, neither was there nor will there be, any one who was never bound by the chain of sin;"² and finally (as it is superfluous to quote all the places where such general expressions are to be met) when he adds, in his *Enchiridion*, chapter VI: "All children, without any exception, contract sin in their birth;"³ we must always bear in mind the declaration made by the holy Doctor in the book *On Nature and Grace*, chapter XXXVI, and elsewhere: "Except the Blessed Virgin, whom I will not suffer to be named when sin is in question, because she totally over-

¹ "Neminem nasci ex Adam nisi vinculo delicti et damnationis obstrictum, neminemque indeliberari nisi renascendo per Christum."

² "Non est in filiis hominum, nec fuit, nec erit qui nullo unquam peccato fuerit obstrictus."

³ "Nullo excepto, parvuli nascendo peccatum traxerunt."

came sin,"¹ and consequently suppose that these general conclusions do not include the Blessed Virgin: otherwise, it would appear as though St. Augustine had contradicted himself; which cannot be supposed without the most grievous injury to so great a Doctor.

XXVII.

TESTIMONY OF OTHER FATHERS OF THE CHURCH IN FAVOR OF MARY'S PRIVILEGE.

After St. Augustine, we like to quote St. Ephraim, the Syrian, by whom the Blessed Virgin is proclaimed "Immaculate and unsullied, incorrupt and wholly chaste, and most remote from all filth and stain of sin, the Spouse of God and our Queen."²

St. Cyril of Alexandria, who flourished in the fifth century, expresses himself in a manner still more decisive. Here are his words: "All men, except Him who was born of a Virgin, and that same most holy Virgin of whom was born the Man-God, are born in original sin, and we come into this world afflicted with the most grievous blindness, which indeed we inherit from our first parent, the

¹ "Excipio Beatam Virginem, de qua nullam prorsus haberi questionem volo quoties de peccato agitur, quia vicit omni parte peccatum."

² "Immaculata et intemerata, incorrupta et prorsus pudica, atque ab omni sorde et labe peccati alienissima, Dei sponsa et Domina nostra." (*Orat. De Sanctâ Dei Genetrice.*)

origin of our race."¹ And he gives, moreover, the motive for this exception, since he goes on to say: "Who ever heard of an architect, building a house for himself, and giving possession of it to his greatest enemy?"²

Let us follow up St. Cyril with St. Maximus, bishop of Turin, who says explicitly: "Mary was a fit dwelling for Christ, not because of the disposition of her body, but on account of *original grace*."³ Then, we have St. Proclus, disciple and successor of St. John Chrysostom, who affirms that Mary was *formed essentially pure*.⁴

XXVIII.

The sixth century presents St. Fulgentius, who judiciously remarks⁵ that the Angel, addressing

¹ "Omnes homines, excepto illo, qui de Virgine natus est, et *sacratissimè etiam Virgine*, ex quâ Deus homo preiit in mundum, exemptâ, cum peccato originali nascimur, et gravissimâ cæcitate depressi in mundum venimus, quam quidem cæcitatem de radice primi parentis contraximus." (*In Evang. Joan.* lib. VI, adjecto explanationi Cyrilli per Judocum Clichtoveum Neoportuensem, Doctorem Theologum, cap. XV, Oper. S. Cyrilli Alexandrini. Basileæ, 1566.)

² In. Conc. Eph. N. VI. "Quis unquam audivit architectum, qui sibi domum ædificavit, ejus occupatorem et possessionem primo suo inimico cessisse."

³ "Idoneum planè Maria Christo habitaculum non pro habitu corporis, sed *pro gratiâ originali*." (St. Maximus, Hom. V, *ante Natale Domini*.)

⁴ *Orat. V, Laudat. S. Genitricis.*

⁵ *Serm. de Laudibus Mariæ.*

Mary as *full of grace*, wished to convey the idea that the ancient sentence of the first wrath was *absolutely destroyed* with regard to her.

XXIX.

In the seventh century, St. Ildefonso taught, in formal terms, that Mary was exempt from original sin: "It is certain that she was exempted from original sin."¹

XXX.

In the eighth century, St. John Damascene wrote: "Since it was to be that the Virgin Mother of God was to spring from Anne, nature did not by any means dare to anticipate the embryo of grace, but waited until grace should have produced its fruit."² He speaks still more positively in his second Discourse *on the Assumption*, where he says: "To this paradise the serpent had no access."³ If then, in the blessed Conception of Mary, nature dared not to anticipate the birth of grace, but waited till the latter had produced its fruit; and if the serpent,

¹ "Constateam ab originali peccato fuisse immunem." (*Disput. de Virg. Mar.*)

² "Quoniam futurum erat, ut Dei Genitrix ac Virgo ex Anna oriretur, natura gratiæ fœtum antevertere minimè ausa est, verùm tantisper expectavit dum gratia fructum suum produxisset." (*Orat. De Nativ. B. M. V.*)

³ "Ad hunc paradisum serpens aditum non habuit."

that is to say, the devil, had no access to Her, assuredly she was exempt from original sin.

XXXI.

St. Peter Damian, who flourished in the tenth century, entirely excludes Mary from the guilt of Adam, that is to say, original sin with its evil concupiscence. Here is what he says: "The flesh of the Virgin, received from Adam, admitted none of Adam's guilt."¹ And why? Because, replies St. Anselm, that bright luminary of the eleventh century, "It was fitting that the Virgin, whom God prepared to be the mother of his only Son, should shine with a purity than which, under God, none greater can be conceived."² And in order that no doubt might arise from the generality of these terms, the holy Doctor, afterwards commenting on the 12th chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, explains his idea more clearly by these words: "All have been dead in sin, whether original, or wilfully incurred; no one has ever been excepted, save only the Mother of God."³ Assuredly, these

¹ "Caro Virginis, ex Adam sumpta, maculas Adam non admisit." (Orat. II *De Nativ. Mariæ*.)

² "Decuit ut Virgo, quam Deus unigenito Filio suo præparavit in Matrem, eâ puritate niteret, quâ major sub Deo nequit intelligi." (*De Conceptu Virginali*, cap. XVIII.)

³ "Omnes mortui sunt in peccatis sive originalibus, si e voluntate additis, nemine prorsus excepto, demptâ Matre Dei." (St. Anselm.)

words are so formal and precise, that they require no explanation.

XXXII.

In the course of the thirteenth century, St. Bonaventure, in his Second Sermon *on the Blessed Virgin*, taught that "our Lady was full of grace in her sanctification, a grace truly preservative against the defilement of original guilt." Many others preached the same doctrine, and especially the learned and meritorious Order of Franciscans, who always professed and vigorously defended it.

XXXIII.

ST. BERNARD WAS NEVER OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY—HE IS DEFENDED AGAINST SUCH AN IMPUTATION.

As St. Bernard closes the series of the Fathers of the Church, it is proper to examine here whether he was really of the contrary opinion, as the professors of that opinion have falsely and unjustly pretended. Their only foundation is the famous Letter addressed by the holy Doctor to the Chapter of the Church of Lyons, when, influenced by the example of other particular churches, who had done the same, it adopted, in its turn, the custom

¹ "Domina nostra fuit plena gratiâ in suâ sanctificatione, gratiâ, scilicet, præservativâ contra fœditatem originalis culpæ."

of celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The holy Abbot exclaimed against the institution of that festival, and it is quite true that he declared it novel, unknown to the holy Fathers, and foreign to the ecclesiastical rite. "Wherefore we wonder much," wrote he, "that some are now pleased to desire a change of existing colors, to introduce a new solemnity, which the ecclesiastical rite knows not, which reason approves not, and which ancient tradition recommends not."¹ Without entering here on the critical examination of the question whether that letter is wrongly attributed to the holy Doctor (as many eminent theologians think), and admitting it, on the contrary, as authentic, I say it does not at all prove St. Bernard averse to our opinion. Let us see how he justifies his reprimand, addressed to the Chapter of Lyons, for having instituted this solemnity: "For, if it thus seemed proper, the matter should have been first referred to the authority of the Apostolic See, and not to act thus rashly and unadvisedly on the simple notions of a few unlearned persons. I had, indeed, noticed this error heretofore amongst some, but I chose to connive at it, as proceeding from simplicity and devotion to the Virgin. But, hav-

¹ "Unde miramur satis, quod visum fuerit hoc tempore quibusdam vestrum voluisse mutare colorem optimum, novam inducendo celebritatem, quam ritus ecclesiasticus nescit, non probat ratio, non commendat antiqua traditio."

ing detected superstition amongst the wise, and in that famous and noble church of which I am specially a son, I know not how I could longer remain silent without great scandal to you all. Yet what I have said is by no means prejudicial to those of sound wisdom; I reserve this whole matter, with all others of a similar nature, for the special examination and decision of the Roman Church, and am prepared to abide by its decision, even if it be of a different opinion."¹ Here the holy Doctor stops. It must be observed that at that period the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was not yet solemnly introduced into the Church. Still, the faithful and the clergy of some places, of their own accord, honored the Mother of God under that title and by that festival. Hence it was that St. Bernard, full of zeal to banish from the Church all the errors and inconveniences which might be introduced by the individual mind, considering, on the one side,

¹ "Nam, si sic videbatur, consulenda erat prius Apostolicæ Sedis auctoritas, et non ita præcipitanter, atque inconsultè, paucorum sequenda simplicitas imperitorum. Et antè quidem apud aliquos errorem compereram, sed dissimulabam parcens devotioni, quæ de simplici corde et amore Virginis veniebat. Verùm apud sapientes, atque in famosâ nobilique Ecclesiâ, et cujus specialiter filius sum, superstitione deprehensa, nescio an sine gravi offensâ etiam vestri omnium dissimulare potuerim. Quæ autem dixi, absque præjudicio sanè dicta sint sanius sapientis; Romanæ præsertim Ecclesiæ auctoritati atque examini totum, sicut et cætera, quæ hujusmodi sunt, universa reservo, ipsius, si quid aliter sapio, paratus judicio emendare."

that the Holy See had given no decision on this head, and, on the other, seeing it adopted by a church so ancient and so illustrious as that of Lyons, feared lest the example of that church, the first planted amongst the Gauls, might cause the solemnity to be generally propagated, to the great detriment of the rights and the supreme authority of the Roman Church. He, consequently, disapproved, and condemned the Chapter of Lyons for having taken upon itself to celebrate and institute such a festival, without having first consulted the Apostolic See: "For, if it thus seemed proper, the matter should have been first referred to the authority of the Apostolic See, and not to act thus rashly and unadvisedly on the simple suggestions of a few unlearned persons." If he adds that such a feast was new, and neither approved by reason, nor recommended by tradition, it was still from the same motive, because that institution took place without the authority of the Holy See, to whose judgment he, moreover, submitted his own opinion on that point and on all others: "I reserve this whole matter, with all others of a similar nature, for the special examination and decision of the Roman Church, and am prepared to abide by its decision."

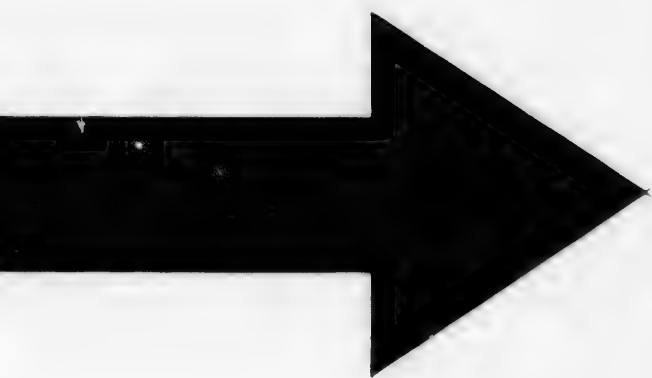
XXXIV.

IT IS PROBABLE THAT, IN HIS LETTER TO THE CANONS OF LYONS, THE SAINT SPOKE OF THE "ACTIVE," AND NOT OF THE "PASSIVE" CONCEPTION

For the rest, amongst the learned who have written on this subject, some have thought that the Abbot of Clairvaux, when condemning, in the letter quoted above, the introduction of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, or when he adds in his Sermon on the Assumption: "If she contracted original guilt from her parents, yet Christian piety forbids us to think that she was less sanctified in the womb than was Jeremias,"¹ meant to speak of her *active* conception, that is to say, that in which the holy parents of the Virgin, *opere maritali*, to use the language of the schools, "*invicem convenientes*, præstiterunt ea quæ maxime spectabant ad ipsius corporis formationem, organisationem et dispositionem ad recipiendam animam rationalem à Deo infundendam;" and that he did not mean to speak of the *passive* conception, that is to say, the infusion of the soul, and its union with the body already formed and duly organized, the passive conception which takes place precisely "at the moment when the rational soul is united to the body

¹ "Quod si originalem maculam à parentibus traxit, sed minus Jeremia sanctificatam in utero credere prohibet pietas Christiana."





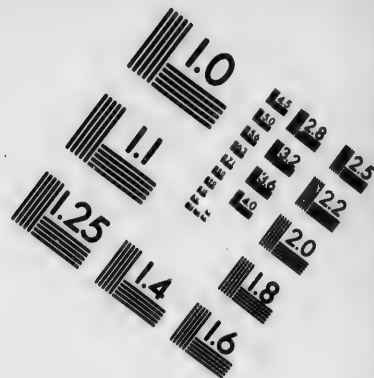
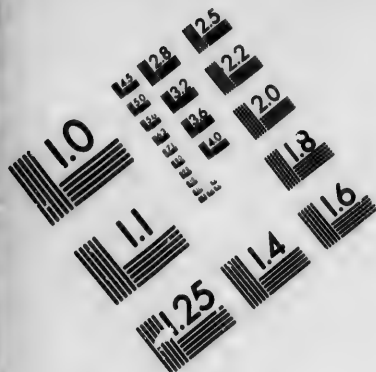
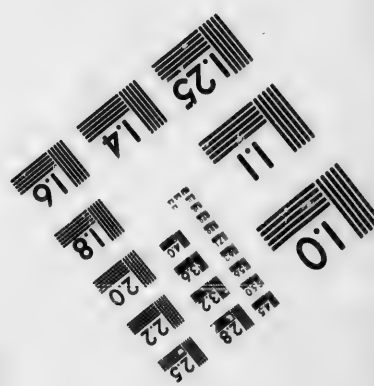
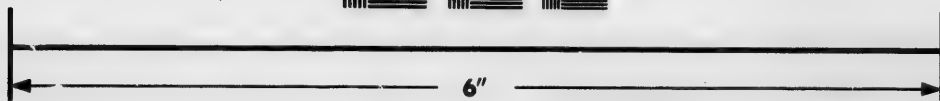
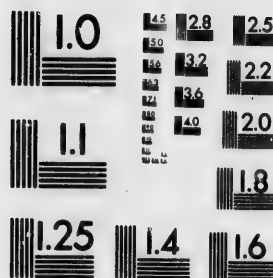


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composed of all its members and organs,"¹ as we have proved from the beginning. Those who maintain that St. Bernard spoke of the *active*, instead of the *passive* conception, found their opinion on the very text of the same letter, where the holy Doctor says: "Whence is the sanctity of the Conception? Is she said to be holy before she exists; since she did not exist before she was conceived? or was there sanctity in the conception itself *inter maritales amplexus*, so that she was conceived and sanctified at one and the same time? Not even this does reason admit. For how can there be sanctity without the sanctifying Spirit? If then she could not be sanctified before her conception, inasmuch as she did not exist; nor in her conception, on account of the sin by which it was accompanied; it follows that she must have been sanctified in the womb after her conception, which sanctification, having excluded sin, made her nativity holy, though not her conception."² Assuredly,

¹ "Illo ipso instanti, quo rationalis anima corpori omnibus membris ac suis organis constanti unitur."

² "Unde Conceptionis sanctitas? An dicitur antè sancta esse, quàm esse; siquidem non erat antequam conciperetur: an fortè inter *amplexus maritales* sanctitas se ipsi Conceptioni immiscuit, ut simul sancificata fuerit et concepta? Ne hoc quidem admittit ratio. Quomodo enim sanctitas absque Spiritu sanctificante? Aut sancto Spiritui societas cum peccato fuit? Aut certè peccatum quomodo non fuit, ubi libido non defuit? Si igitur ante conceptum sui sanctificari non potuit, quoniam non erat; sed nec

these words seem sufficiently strong to authorize the conclusion that the holy Doctor meant to speak, not of the *passive* conception, but of the active conception only. If this interpretation were admitted, all difficulty would vanish, and the doctrine of the Abbot of Clairvaux would be found in perfect accordance with ours.

XXXV.

Any one who refused to admit this interpretation, which seems to us just and reasonable, and would, on the contrary, maintain with Mabillon that St. Bernard was unfavorable to us, would still have to admit that the holy Abbot professed a most tender devotion for Mary, that he showed himself a most ardent defender of her privileges, and that it certainly never was his intention to detract in any degree from the dignity of the Mother of God. It must also be admitted that, whatever might then have been the opinion of the holy Doctor on this subject, if he lived in our days, when the Church has long since established the feast of the Conception, he would not only defend it, but would rejoice beyond measure in that great privi-

in ipso quidem conceptu propter peccatum quod inerat; restat, ut post conceptum in utero jam existens sanctificationem accepisse credatur, quæ excluso peccato sanctam fecerit nativitatem, non tamen et conceptionem."

lege bestowed by the heavenly Father on the Blessed Virgin, in having preserved her from original sin. And if he formerly treated our opinion as *superstitious*, he would now term it *pious*, being instructed and enlightened by the example of the Roman Church; he would devoutly and spontaneously exclaim with us: "Thou art all fair, O Mary, and there is no spot in Thee."

XXXVI.

ST. THOMAS IS EXONERATED FROM THE CHARGE OF DENYING THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY—PASSAGES FROM HIS WORKS WHICH ARE FAVORABLE TO IT.

Let us now see what was the real opinion, on this subject, of another illustrious Doctor, St. Thomas of Aquinas, a great luminary of the Church of God, and justly deserving of the glorious title, Angel of the School. Much stress is laid on the authority of this holy Doctor, who is made to pass for the head of the opposite party. Even if that were true, his authority would still be inferior to that of the Church, who has instituted the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. But is it, indeed, true that St. Thomas was opposed to this special privilege of Mary? If we take note of what he has written in his Sixth Opuscle, "*On the Love of God and our Neighbor*," we shall be induced to draw a very different conclusion:

"The supreme Artificer," says he, "for the better display of his art, made one mirror of surpassing brightness, cleaner than the Seraphim, so that nothing purer could be conceived, unless God himself, namely, *the person of the most glorious Virgin*, concerning whom Anselm wrote: '*It was meet that the conception of that Man should be of the most pure Mary, so pure, that under God, nothing purer could be conceived.*'"

XXXVII.

In the first book of Sentences, distinct. 44, quest. 1, art. 3, he thus expresses himself: "By purity is meant a departure from the contrary, and, consequently, a creature may be found, than which nothing can be purer amongst created things, if it be infected by no taint of sin; and such was the purity of the Blessed Virgin, who was exempt from original and actual sin. She was, however, under God, inasmuch as she had the capacity of sinning."¹ And here it must be observed

¹ *De dilectione Dei et proximi. . . .* "Fecit summus artifex, in ostensionem plenioris artis suae, speculum unum clarissimo clarius, Seraphim tersius, ut purius intelligi non posset, nisi Deus esset, personam, scilicet, *gloriosissimæ Virginis*, de quo Anselmus: *Decebat illius conceptio hominis de Mariâ purissimâ fieret, ed puritate, quæ major sub Deo nequit intelligi.*"

² "Puritas intenditur per recessum à contrario, et ideo potest aliquid creatum reperiri, quo nihil purius esse possit in rebus cre-

that the Angelic Doctor, speaking of the Virgin, does not confine himself to the words, "she was *free* from all sin, both original and actual,"¹ which might also be said of Jeremias, and John the Baptist, and indeed of all children born in sin, after the reception of baptism, whereby it is effaced in them; but he says of Her that "she WAS EXEMPT from all sin, both original and actual."² Now if Mary was, according to St. Thomas, exempt from original sin, it is evident that, according to him, she never contracted it; because, if she had once contracted it, even for an instant, it could not be said that she was exempt from it (*immunis*). Hence the holy Doctor establishes a comparison between the purity of God, and that of the Blessed Virgin, saying that "neither God nor the most Blessed Virgin ever sinned;"³ with this difference, however, that God is by nature exempt from sin, while the Blessed Virgin has been preserved from it by a special privilege.

XXXVIII.

Nevertheless, our adversaries bring forward no

atis, si nullâ contagione peccati infectum sit, et talis fuit puritas B. Virginis quæ à peccato originali et actuali immunis fuit. Fuit tamen sub Deo, quatenus fuit in potentiâ ad peccandum."

¹ "Omni peccato originali et actuali caruisse."

² "Ab omni peccato originali et actuali IMMUNIS FUIT."

³ "Quod nec Deus, nec Beatissima Virgo unquam peccaverint."

less than fifteen passages in proof of their assertion that the Angelic Doctor was opposed to the Immaculate Conception of Mary. These passages are chiefly taken from the Third and Fourth books of Sentences, from his *Quodlibet*, from the Commentaries, both on the 3rd Psalm, and on the Apocalypse, and finally from the Summa.¹ In these places it is said that "the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin."

XXXIX.

THE WRITINGS OF THE HOLY DOCTOR HAVE BEEN ALTERED IN SOME PLACES.

Now, how are we to reconcile St. Thomas with St. Thomas? How explain his having, on the same subject, taught two doctrines wholly opposed one to the other, that is to say, one favorable to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and the other contrary to it? Did he retract the former, when he came to maintain the latter? Not so. Did he, then, contradict himself? or rather, when he said that Mary had contracted original sin, did he forget that he had before declared her exempt from that sin? To contradict himself was not the part of a Doctor such as the Angel of the Schools, profoundly philosophical, whose works are all ad-

¹ III Part. Quest. 27, a. 1. seq.

² "Virgo Beata in originali peccato fuit concepta."

mirably connected with each other, and who, moreover, maintains throughout the most perfect consistency. How then are we to explain this mystery, without wounding the honor of the holy Doctor, and weakening his authority? The mystery will at once disappear, if a comparison be instituted between the old and the new editions of the works of this great Doctor, and if it be clearly proved that many of his works, especially those in which he treats of the Conception of Mary, have undergone either suppressions or evident alterations. Of this we have ample and imposing testimony from some of the most learned and respectable writers of the illustrious Order of Dominicans. Let us quote some of the most important. Bishop Wielmo, in his book *Pro defensione Sancti Thomæ*, speaks thus: "Still more execrable is that which certain wicked men have done, either for the purpose of weakening the authority of Thomas, or, as I think, to prop and to prove by the testimony of so great a man, some opinion of theirs, which was a subject of controversy."¹ Giles of Rome, who was the beloved and devoted disciple of the Angelic Doctor, composed, a few years after the Saint's death, a book, entitled: *Castigatorium in Corrup-*

¹ "Execrabilis est, quod nequam et scelesti homines quidam, vel ad Thomæ auctoritatem enervandam, vel, ut ego quidem arbitrator, ad suam aliquam opinionem, quæ in controversiam vertebatur, tanti viri testimoniis fulciendam et comprobendam egerunt."

*torem Librorum Thomæ Aquinatis.*¹ Richard Kla-
poel, Hervy Noël, William Messelech, John of
Paris, William Bollionio, Nicholas Madense, Dur-
andelle and Archbishop Hugo, all members of the
holy Institute of the Dominicans, have also written
strongly against those who had altered the writings
of St. Thomas. And John Nicolaï, in his Preface to
the edition of the Works of the holy Doctor, pub-
lished in Paris in 1663, attests and declares: "that
he had purged the text of the *Summa* of St. Thomas
not only of typographical errors, but still more of
all factitious things, deliberately left therein, which
perverted the true sense, or the historical truth and
sincerity; that he had also filled up several gaps
and vacancies to keep up the thread of the text,
otherwise interrupted, and leaving the reader in
doubt for want of the full sense, or leading him
into error by a wrong meaning."²

XL.

EXAMPLES OF THESE INTERPOLATIONS.

In proof of this truthful assertion of the learned
Dominican Nicolaï, we have the testimony of the
ancient editions of the Commentary on the third

¹ A Rebuke for the Corrupter of the Books of St. Thomas
d'Aquinas.

² "Se textum Summæ Divi Thomæ non à typographicis tantum
corruptelis expurgasse, sed maximè ab affectatis, ac industriâ et
studio relictis, quæ legitimum sensum, vel historicam sinceritatem,

chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, where St. Thomas says: "Amongst all women, I do not find one wholly exempt from sin, at least original, or venial, except only the Virgin Mary, most pure and most worthy of all praise, who was entirely exempt from sin both original and venial."¹ This exception, so clear and so positive, made by the holy Doctor, is not to be found in the later editions, that is to say, in those now in circulation, and in the hands of the learned. So, in the present editions of the Summa, III^d part, quest. 27, art. 2, St. Thomas is made to say that "neither before, nor in, but after animation she was cleansed from original sin and sanctified;"² whilst, in the Seville manuscript, in that preserved in the Dominican Convent in Marseilles, and some others, these words do not occur at all in the passage cited. So true is this, that the Dominican Bromiardo,³ quoting the passage just referred to, makes no difficulty in affirming that "St. Thomas (III^d part, quest. 27, art.

veritatemque, perverterent; hiatus quoque plures, et lacunas implevisse ad supplendam seriem textûs, quæ alioquin nulla erat, ac dubium lectorem relinquebat propter non satis plenum sensum, vel in errorem inducebat propter sensum illegitimum."

¹ "Mulierem ex omnibus non inveni, quæ à peccato omnino immunis esset ad minùs originis, vel veniali; excipitur purissima, et omni laude dignissima Virgo Maria, quæ omnino immunis fuit à peccato originali et veniali."

² "Nec ante animationem, nec in animatione, sed post animationem sanctificatam, et à peccato originali mundatam fuisse."

³ In Summâ prædicantium, Verbo *Maria*, art. 2, n. 10.

2) places the excellence of her sanctification, as to priority of time, in this, that she was sanctified in her animation, that is, in the union of her soul with her body in her mother's womb,"¹ which signifies that Mary was immaculate in her passive conception, or rather that her soul, prevented by sanctifying grace, was exempt from original sin.

XLI.

It is needless to cite all the passages wherein alterations or suppressions have been made in the text of the holy Doctor, but even in the 4th Opus-
cule *On the Angelical Salutation* there is one remarkable instance, where, according to the testimony of Salmeron and Peter Canisius, the Saint said that Mary was "most pure in regard to every fault, because she never incurred the guilt of either original or actual sin;"² words which have been suppressed in the recent editions.

If then, in the works of the holy Doctor, there are passages, and these beyond the reach of suspicion, which favor our doctrine; and if it can be proved that other passages contrary to that same

¹ "Sanctus Thomas ponit ejus sanctificationis excellentiam, quantum ad temporis prioritatem, in hoc, quod sanctificata fuit in sui animatione, id est in conjunctione animæ cum corpore in utero matris suæ."

² "Purissima quantum ad omnem culpam, quia nec originale, nec veniale peccatum aliquando incurrit."

doctrine differ from the ancient and original text of the author, and are consequently mutilated, altered and falsified; the very rules of sound criticism require that we hold by the first rather than the second, and that it is by the former, and not the latter, that we ascertain the real opinion of St. Thomas of Aquinas.

XLII.

And we are the more bound to judge thus, inasmuch as St. Thomas has himself established the principles to prove that Mary, in her happy Conception, was exempt from original sin. It is true, the Angelic Doctor has taught that "a festival cannot be celebrated, except for something holy:"¹ but the Church celebrates the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary; her Conception was, therefore, holy. He likewise taught and wrote: "It cannot be doubted that the most Blessed Virgin was born without original sin, because the Church celebrates her Nativity."² Now, the Church also celebrates and solemnizes, by precept, the Conception of Mary; hence we cannot doubt, according to St. Thomas, that Mary was conceived without original sin. Thus, if we would not suppose (and the supposition would be wholly unjust and

¹ "Non posse festum celebrari, nisi de Sancto."

² "Dubitari non posse Beatissimam Virginem sine peccato originali natam esse, quia Ecclesia ejus Nativitatem celebrat."

unfounded) that the Angelic Doctor wished to act in contradiction to his own principles, we must reasonably conclude that, if he lived now, when the whole Church is unanimous in honoring and venerating the Conception of the Mother of God as Immaculate, he would not only embrace the doctrine which we maintain, but he would defend it with all the power of his mighty genius. This has been positively affirmed by a great light of the Thomastite School, John of St. Thomas, who, in the first part, distinct 2, on the doctrine of St. Thomas, art. 2, expresses himself as follows: "Speaking according to the doctrine of St. Thomas, since the Roman Church celebrates the Feast of the Conception, we are bound to think of it as the Church does, and thus would St. Thomas himself think."¹ Any one who desires more ample information on the doctrine of St. Thomas, with regard to the present question, may read the excellent work of Cardinal Sfondrate, entitled *Innocentia Vindicata*, where the learned author proposes to demonstrate the Immaculate Conception of Mary, by arguments exclusively taken from the Angel of the School. For us, it suffices to conclude that the holy Doctor is not opposed to our opinion, which is based on that of the Church, since he teaches doctrines and estab-

¹ "Postquam Ecclesia Romana celebrat festum Conceptionis, loquendo in vi doctrinæ D. Thomæ, oportet vice versâ de his sententiis censere, et sic Divus Thomas censureret."

lishes principles by which it is maintained and demonstrated.

XLIII.

DOCTRINE OF THE THEOLOGIANS ON THIS SUBJECT.

Finally, it remains for us to ascertain what was the doctrine of the theologians who succeeded the holy Fathers in defence of the truth, and whose authority, on that very account, is certainly worthy of all respect in questions relating either to faith or ecclesiastical discipline.

XLIV.

ST. DOMINICK A DEFENDER OF OUR DOCTRINE.

We shall commence this series with the holy founder of the illustrious Order of Preaching Friars, St. Dominick, who was a great light of the Church of God. There is in the city of Barcelona a very ancient and valuable table, probably brought from Toulouse, giving an account of the disputes which took place between St. Dominick himself and the Albigensian heretics. There we find this graphic and simple narrative: "St. Dominick, the glorious father of the Order of Preachers, came to Toulouse for the defence of the Church, which he confirmed by miracles. The Albigenses principally asserted three errors: *first*, that Christ was not He who is now said to have come, and who was to redeem

mankind; *second*, that the consecrated host did not contain the real body of Christ; *third*, that as Adam was formed of pure and undefiled clay in the plain of Damascus, so He who was to redeem mankind should be born of an Immaculate Virgin. But the Virgin who is called the Mother of Christ was defiled by original sin; therefore, the offspring of such a Virgin was not He who was to redeem the world. Against these errors, St. Dominick composed a little treatise concerning the body of Christ, affirming that Christ did redeem mankind, and with unerring truth confessing that Christ was indeed born of an Immaculate Virgin; whereupon, the Albigenses rising furiously against the same Blessed Dominick, maintained that that Virgin was conceived in original sin; and Blessed Dominick replied, as is stated in his book, that what they said was untrue, because the Virgin Mary is she of whom the Holy Ghost said by the mouth of Solomon: 'Thou art all fair, my beloved, and there is no spot in thee.' Finally, the heretics still persisting in their erroneous opinion, recourse was had to a miracle, namely, that Blessed Dominick should cast his book into a blazing furnace, and that if it were not burned, they should believe: and Blessed Dominick threw the book into the furnace, and it was taken out uninjured."¹ This miracle is men-

¹ "Dominicus sanctus et gloriosus Pater Ordinis Prædicatorum

tioned by Peter Canisius, in his 1st Book *On the Mother of God*, ch. VII; by Salmeron, in his Commentary *On the Epistle to the Romans*; and by the Cistercian Pierre de Vaux-Cernai in his *History of the Albigenses*, ch. VIII. After these, Gotescalc, who lived before Sixtus IV, affirms and maintains (in his *Sermon on the Conception of the Blessed Virgin*) that, in the book against the Albigenses, of which we have already spoken, St. Dominick defended the opinion that Mary was preserved, that is to say, exempted from original sin. Suarez,

venit Tolosan pro Ecclesiæ defensione, quam miraculis confirmavit. Albigenses affirmabant principaliter tres errores: *primus*, quod Christus non erat ille qui jam dicitur venisse, et qui debebat redimere genus humanum; *secundus*, quod hostia consecrata non continebat verum corpus Christi; *tertius*, quod sicut Adam formatus fuerat in campo Damasceno ex luto mundo, et non maculato; sic ille, qui redimere debebat genus humanum, nasci debebat ex Virgine non maculata. Sed Virgo quæ dicitur Mater Christi fuit maculata per culpam originalum; ergo natus ex tali Virgine non est ille qui debebat mundum redimere. Contra quos errores sanctus Dominicus fecit quemdam libellum de Corpore Christi, affirmando quod Christus redemit genus humanum, et firmissimâ veritate confitendo, Christum natum de Virgine Immaculata; et Albigenses furiosè insurgendo contra ipsum B. Dominicum dicebant quod illa Virgo concepta fuit in peccato originali; et B. Dominicus, prout continetur in suo libello, respondebat, quod non erat verum quod dicebant, quoniam Virgo Maria est illa, de qua Spiritus Sanctus per Salomonem dicit: Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te. Finaliter existentes hæretici in eorum erronea intentione, venerunt ad miraculi experientiam, videlicet, quod B. Dominicus projiceret libellum suum in quodam furno ardente, et si ibi non combureretur, crederent: et B. Dominicus projecit illum in furno ardente, et libellus inustus exivit."

3 p. q. 27, d. 3, sect. 15; Vasquez, dist. 17, and others, speak of this book of St. Dominick. In it the Saint thus expresses himself: "As the first Adam was formed of virgin earth, still uncursed, it was fitting that it should be the same with regard to the second Adam."¹

Thus, from the document which we have just transcribed, whose authority cannot be disputed, it seems clear that the glorious St. Dominick professed like ourselves the doctrine that Mary was exempt from original sin, which is equivalent to saying that her Conception was immaculate.

XLV.

ST. VINCENT FERRIER DEFENDS OUR DOCTRINE.

It is confidently asserted of St. Vincent Ferrier, who flourished in the fifteenth century (1419), that he was opposed to our doctrine. But those who think so have probably never had the opportunity of reading his Second Sermon *On the Nativity*, where the Saint speaks of Mary's Conception in these terms: "Think not that it was as with us, who are conceived in sin; for, as soon as her soul was created, it was sanctified, and immediately the angels in heaven celebrated the Feast of the Con-

¹ "Sicut primus Adam fuit ex terra virgine et nunquam maledicta formatus, ita decuit in secundo Adam fieri."

ception."¹ The same saint, in another sermon entitled *The Conception of the Blessed Virgin*, says: "Of no saint was the Conception ever solemnized; none but those of Christ and the Virgin."² Now if, according to the exact doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, it is only saints whose festivals are solemnized, and if, according to St. Vincent Ferrier, it is only the Conceptions of Jesus and of Mary that are celebrated, it follows that, according to the same St. Vincent, the Conception of Mary was exempt from original sin: otherwise it could not be qualified as holy, or a feast instituted in its honor. Finally, in a note placed on the margin of a manuscript containing the *Summa* of St. Thomas, p. 3, q. 27, art. 2, ad. 3, we read these words written by St. Vincent Ferrier's own hand: "The Blessed Virgin was exempt from original and actual sin."³ Cardinal Sfondrate testifies that this manuscript was preserved, before the recent disturbances in Spain, in the Dominican convent of Alcaniz. I know not what more could be desired to prove that St. Vincent Ferrier also maintained that Mary was conceived without the least stain of original sin.

¹ "Non credatis quia fuerit sicut in nobis, qui in peccatis concipimur; sed statim ac anima fuit creata, fuit sanctificata, et statim angeli in cœlo celebrarunt festum Conceptionis."

² "De nullo sancto fuit festum Conceptionis, nisi Christi, et Virginis."

³ "B. Virgo fuit immunis à peccato originali et actuali."

XLVI.

IT WAS ALSO THE OPINION OF ALBERT THE GREAT.

Albertus Magnus, who was, as every one knows, the preceptor of St. Thomas, says in his book *On the Praises of the Virgin*, on the word *missus*: "This Virgin was the only one excepted from the common rule: 'all sinned in Adam.'"¹ He adds in his *Biblia de Maria*, on the Gospel of St. Luke: "The guilt of sin is threefold, to wit, original, mortal and venial. Now, the most Blessed Virgin Mary was exempt from this triple woe."² Let it not be said that by these words Albert the Great meant to convey the idea that Mary was purified from original sin, and not that she had never contracted it; for, Albert the Great speaking in the same way of original and actual sin, it follows that as the Virgin never contracted any actual fault, so also must she never have contracted the original fault. It is true that in other places Albertus Magnus seems to deny the Immaculate Conception of Mary; but we must either conclude that he changed his opinion on this question, or rather that some fanatical partisan of the contrary doctrine altered his writings, as they did those of St. Thomas, which we have already proved.

¹ *De laudibus Virginis . . . missus*: "Hæc Virgo sola à comuni illa regula excipitur: omnes . . . Adam peccaverunt."

² "Væ culpæ est triplex, scilicet originalis, mortalis et venialis: porro sine isto triplici væ fuit Beatissima Virgo Maria."

XLVII.

JOHN OF VITERBO, AN ADVERSARY OF THE PIOUS OPINION, BECAME ITS
DEFENDER—REASON OF THIS CHANGE.

Raynaud¹ says of John of Viterbo, who was also a Dominican: "John of Viterbo wrote a whole work on the Immaculate Conception, of which I find this abridgment, for the entire work I have not seen. The author proves that because it is the height of infamy to be born in the wrath of God, in the darkness of guilt and in iniquity, so the Conception of the Virgin must have been Immaculate. That it is the particular opinion of St. Thomas and of the true Order of Preachers, that the Blessed Virgin has never been subjected for one instant to the anger of God. That, since Christ chose rather to have his own birth doubted than the character of his Mother, choosing to be born of one who was only espoused, as St. Ambrose observes; they act against the will of Christ who obstinately and falsely endeavor to establish a defiled Conception."²

¹ Tome VIII in *Tractata de Pietate, Lugduni*.

² "Joannes de Viterbio opus integrum conscripsit de Immaculata Conceptione, cujus hunc breviculum reperio; nam opus integrum non vidi. Probat auctor, quod Virginis conceptus fuit immaculatus, eo quod summa animæ infamia est concipi in ira Dei, in tenebris culpæ, et in iniquitatibus. Quod B. Thomæ, ac veri Ordinis Prædicatorum propria opinio est, B. Virginem ne pro instanti quidem subjacuisse iræ Dei. Quod cum Christus maluerit

The same author informs us, in the passage cited, that John of Viterbo was at first an ardent opponent of the doctrine favorable to the Immaculate Conception of Mary; but that, being reduced by a dangerous malady to the point of death, and perhaps repenting of having formerly entertained such an opinion, he addressed himself to Mary, and made the following vow: "O blessed Virgin Mary, if it be true that thou wert conceived without sin, vouchsafe to restore me to health as a sign of thy purity; and I will henceforward celebrate the feast of thy Conception, and announce thine innocence to the people, retracting what I have hitherto preached on that subject."¹ He had no sooner pronounced this vow, than he was immediately cured, and having assembled the people by the accustomed tolling of the bell, he began at once to preach and to defend the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

homines de suo ortu quàm de fama Matris dubitare, eligens nasci ex conjuncta, ut notat S. Ambrosius; contra Christi voluntatem facere, qui pertinaciter, et adhibitis falsiloquiis maculatam Conceptionem adstruere conantur."

¹ "O B. Virgo Maria, si verum est quod sine peccati macula concepta fuisti, rogo mihi sanitatem donare digneris in signum tuæ puritatis; et ego voveo toto tempore vitæ meæ celebrare festum Conceptionis, et annuntiare populis innocentiam tuam, et retractare quidquid in contrarium prædicavi."

XLVIII.

CONSEQUENCES WHICH PROCEED FROM THIS DOCUMENT.

From this precious document result two very important consequences : the first is, that it was the true and undoubted opinion of St. Thomas and the Order of Preachers that *the Blessed Virgin was never for one moment subject to the anger of God* ; the other is that, John of Viterbo having besought Mary to make known, by the miracle which he asked of her, whether she had been conceived without any shade of sin, she answered by the immediate, perfect and lasting cure of the mortal sickness from which he had begged her to deliver him.

XLIX.

OPINION OF THAULERE, MELCHIOR CANO, AND NOEL ALEXANDER.

Thaulere, a religious truly remarkable both for piety and learning, says in his first sermon *On the Purification* : "The Blessed Virgin was perpetually free from original guilt, from which her Son preserved her, so that she was never for one moment a child of wrath."¹ Such is also the opinion of Louis Bertram, Lanuza, Catalan, and Cassali ; of

¹ "B. Virgo culpæ originalis perpetuo expers fuit, à qua illam præservavit Filius ejus, ita ut ne momento quidem temporis filia iræ fuerit."

the Blessed James de Voragine, who was Archbishop of Genoa, and who wrote, in favor of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, two works in which he gives an account of the miracles which God has wrought in support of that doctrine; of the famous Catharin, who wrote a small work in defence of the Immaculate Conception of Mary; and of Melchior Cano, who, after enumerating those writers who had declared against the Immaculate Conception, concludes by saying: "Still, the contrary opinion is piously and with much probability, defended in the Church!"

Finally, we must add to this list of theologians the celebrated Noël Alexander, who thus replies to the authority of those Fathers who are usually quoted by the opponents of our doctrine: "The ancient Fathers brought forward by St. Augustine against the Pelagians, together with St. Augustine himself, are easily explained as regards original sin; for as the Blessed Virgin was a descendant of Adam, she was subject to the common law of contracting original sin; and she would inevitably have contracted it, had she not been preserved from it by a special gift of the Redeemer." He then adds: "The opinion of the Immaculate Conception we will maintain, not only as probable and

"Quin potius contraria sententia et probabiliter et pie in Ecclesia defenditur."

pious, but as the particular doctrine of our Faculty of Paris, should there be an occasion to speak or to write about it."¹

L.

OPINION OF VINCENT JUSTINIANI.

As it would be too tedious to recite the names of all the Dominican theologians who have professed and maintained the opinion that Mary was exempt from original sin, we shall pass them over, with the exception of the learned and accurate Justiniani, in his Addition to the Life of the Blessed Louis Bertrand.² Here are his words: "It were little short of madness to attempt now to write, teach, or preach against the pious opinion entertained in Spain, in the Indies, in France, and in almost the whole of Europe; it would be just like one singing a discord, and persisting therein, verifying the words of Terence, that *they labor in vain, who have only odium for their pains*. It

¹ "Antiqui Patres, quos Augustinus adversus Pelagianos in aciem educit, et Augustinus ipse de peccati originalis debito, facile exponi possunt; cum enim ex Adamo B. Virgo propagata fuerit, communi lege peccati originalis contrahendi tenebatur, illudque reipsa contraxisset, nisi singulari Redemptoris servata fuisset beneficium. . . . Sententiam de Immaculata Conceptione non solum ut probabilem et piam, sed ut propriam Facultatis nostrae Parisiensis doctrinam propugnabimus, si de ea dicendi scribendique detur occasio."

² Chap. III, § 14.

were more prudent to give up their opinion at once, even as men abandon a falling house (which Pliny says is the case with mice) in order to save their lives. They have now neither chairs, pulpits, confessionals nor books on their side. They have with them neither royal crowns, nor episcopal mitres, nor cardinals' hats, nor pontifical tiara, since the Council of Trent openly declared that it had no intention to include the Mother of God in its decree on original sin."¹

LI.

FAVORABLE TESTIMONY OF ST. BERNARDINE OF SIENNA, ST. BRUNO, ST. LAURENCE JUSTINIAN, ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA, AND ST. ALPHONSO DE LIGUORI.

There are besides several saints, remarkable also for their learning, who openly professed and maintained by their writings the pious opinion of the Immaculate Conception of our heavenly Queen.

¹ "Jam in Hispania, in Indiis, in Gallia, et in tota pene Europa contra piam opinionem aut scribere, aut docere, aut concionari velle, cum nihil aliud fuerit quam malè canere, et in malo cantu durare, et occasionem dare ne illud Terentii eis occinatur: frustra niti, et laborando nihil aliud quam odium querere, extremæ dementiæ est; magnæ prudentiæ fuerit eam opinionem omnino deserre, quemadmodum ii qui collabentem jamjam domum vident (quod de muribus Plinius scribit) fugâ se subducunt. Jam illis desunt cathedræ, suggesta, confessionalia, libri. Jam regum diademata, jam episcoporum mitra, jam cardinalium galeri, jam pontificum tiaræ et ipsamet concilia, quando Tridentinum omnino protestatum est non esse suæ intentionis in decreto de peccato originali Deiparam comprehendere."

St. Bernardine of Sienna says, in his 49th Sermon: "It is wholly incredible that the Son of God would himself vouchsafe to be born and assume flesh of a virgin who had once been tainted with original sin."¹

The entire body of the Franciscans defend and maintain this doctrine with particular ardor.

St. Bruno, founder of the contemplative Order of the Carthusians, speaks thus of Mary in his commentary on the 101st Psalm: "She is that pure and undefiled earth which the Lord blessed; she is consequently free from every taint of sin."²

In a sermon delivered on the feast of the Annunciation before the people of Venice, St. Laurence Justinian affirmed that the great Virgin "was, from her very conception, prevented in benediction."³

The learned St. Thomas of Villanova, Archbishop of Valencia in Spain, says: "It became the Mother of God to be most pure, sinless, and unspotted. Wherefore, she was not only sanctified when she became a maid, but in the womb, and in her very *conception*, she was most holy."

¹ "Non enim credendum est quod ipse Filius Dei voluerit nasci ex virgine, et sumere ejus carnem, quæ esset maculata aliquo originali peccato."

² "Hæc est incorrupta terra, illa cui benedixit Dominus; ab omni propterea peccati contagione libera."

³ "Ab ipsa conceptione fuit in benedictionibus præventa."

⁴ Conc. III de Nativit. Virg. Maria.

And he accounts for this by adding: "For it became not the Sanctuary of God, the House of Wisdom, the Shrine of the Spirit, the Urn of the celestial manna, to have in herself any spot or stain. Hence it was that, before her holy soul was infused into the flesh, that sacred flesh was wholly cleansed from all dregs and stain; and the soul, when it was infused, had no stain of sin from the flesh, neither did it contract any."

Passing over many others, let us go on to St. Alphonso de Liguori, who vigorously maintains our opinion in several parts of his works, and more especially in his book on *the Glories of Mary*; and he demonstrates by divers arguments that the Virgin was preserved from the original stain. "In fact," said he, "it became the Eternal Father himself, for Mary was his daughter, and his first-born daughter; it became the Son of God, for Mary was his mother; and it became the Holy Ghost, for Mary was his spouse."¹

¹ "Decuit matrem Dei esse purissimam, sine labe, sine peccato. Unde non solum quando puella sanctissima, et in utero sanctissima, et in *conceptione* sanctissima." . . . "Non enim decebat Sanctuarium Dei, Domum Sapientie, Reliquiarium Spiritus, Urnam manne celestis, aliquam in se labem habere. Propter quod antequam anima illa sanctissima infunderetur, plene fuit caro illa mundata ab omni fæce, et labe; et anima cum infusa est nullam habuit ex carne, neque contraxit labem peccati."

² Amongst the saints who have solemnly pronounced in favor of our cause, we may also count St. Bridget, who was well versed

LII.

THE THEOLOGIAN'S OF THE THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES,
WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, STRENUOUSLY DEFENDED OUR DOCTRINE.

Resuming now the series of theologians, we can safely affirm that, from the thirteenth century,

in the knowledge of divine things, because she had Christ himself for her teacher, and whose revelations, consequently, according to the learned Cardinal Turrecremata, are deserving of the fullest faith. Now, the saint in one of her revelations makes the Blessed Virgin thus speak: "The truth is that I was conceived without original sin, for as neither my Son nor I has ever sinned, so was there no marriage more honorable than that from which I sprang." Being one day questioned by a learned man, whose name is not mentioned, on the very subject of the Immaculate Conception, she immediately answered: "If it please the Mother of Mercy I will interrogate her on this matter, and I will tell you what she says." St. Bridget faithfully fulfilled her promise; for, being soon after in a blissful ecstasy, she asked of Mary what answer she was to give to the person who had put the question to her, and the Virgin said: "My daughter, you are to believe that all those who believe and confess that I was conceived without original sin, are in the right, while those who maintain the contrary opinion are wrong, especially if they hold it with temerity." The Revelations have been declared authentic and approved by three sovereign Pontiffs, Urban V, Gregory XI, and Martin V. The second, that is to say, Gregory XI, after having them carefully examined by some of the most learned cardinals, by several bishops, and by illustrious and competent theologians, hesitated not to say that "all that is contained in them is eminent for truth, full of holiness, clear and perfect." The reader may refer, if he has the opportunity, to Cardinal Turrecremata in *Prologo defens. earundem Revelationem*, and he will there find the strongest and most solid defence of these Revelations. Trithemus, in *Chron. Hirsaugiensi*, an. 1369, treats also of this subject.

when the question of the Immaculate Conception was first discussed in the schools, down to the fifteenth century, our opinion has had invincible defenders, amongst whom were John Duns, Peter Aureolo, Francis de Mayronis, John Bassoli, William de Rubione, Peter de Aquila Scotello, Thomas of Strasburg, Francis Martini, Pierre d'Ailly, Jean Charlier, or Gerson, John of Segovia, Alphonse Tostat, Nicholas de Cusa, William Verilungo, Nicholas Orbello, Denis Rickel the Carthusian, James of Valencia, Gabriel Biel, Perbarte de Temeswar, Ambrose Spiera, Marsile d'Inghen, John Trithemus, Henriquez, Comitolo, Vasquez, Pinsanno, Salmeron, and many others.

LIII.

The contrary opinion had also its advocates ; but they are much inferior to the others, both in numbers and in authority : they are only five in number, and those may be considered the leaders of the opposition, namely, Giles Colonna, Henri de Gand, Durand de St. Pourçain, Alvarez Pelagius, and Gregory of Rimini.

LIV.

From the fifteenth century till our own times, there were but very few theologians of any distinction who did not maintain the opinion of the Im-

maculate Conception of Mary. With regard to the regular Orders, we have elsewhere said that they defended that doctrine with particular fervor. Conspicuous amongst them is the illustrious and most meritorious Company of Jesus, of which Father Giorgi asserts¹ that its members have ever and everywhere (*semper et ubique*) defended that extraordinary privilege of Mary. We shall here cite but three of their number, who were amongst the most renowned, and who express the opinion of all the others.

LV.

AUTHORITY OF SUAREZ.

The illustrious Father Suarez triumphantly demonstrates² that Mary, having been predestined to become the Mother of God, must necessarily be exempted from the law of sin: "For God gives grace to every one in such time, measure and perfection as, according to right and prudent reason, is best adapted to the end, dignity and office, to which he is appointed by God himself: now, to be the Mother of God was the primary dignity of the Virgin, by which title the greatest love and honor are due to her, and to that dignity is joined an-

¹ *Adnot. in Commentarium Mariani Parthenii de vita et studiis Hieronymi Lagomarsini.*

² *3d Part Divi Thomæ, tom. 2, quæst. 27, art. 2, disput. 3, sect. 5.*

other, namely, that of coöperating in a singular manner in the work of Redemption; to which end nothing can be more antagonistic than sin. And hence it follows that she is in a singular manner Lady of all, and Queen of Angels. For (as Anselm has well observed), as God by creating all things is Father and Lord of all, so the Blessed Virgin repairing all things by His merits is Mother and Lady of all things: but it did not become the Mistress to be inferior to her servants, the holy Angels, in perpetual holiness, and innocence, and purity of life.”¹

He afterwards strengthens his argument by saying: “No gift of grace conferred on any pure creature, has been withheld from the Virgin: now, to be created in grace is a great gift of grace, which was conferred on Adam and Eve, and perfect innocence, excluding all guilt, was bestowed on the Angels: both gifts must, therefore, have been given

¹ “Dat enim Deus, unicuique gratiam eo tempore, modo, et perfectione, quo secundum rectam et prudentem rationem maximè congruit fini, dignitati et officio, in quo ab ipso Deo constituitur: sed prima dignitas Virginis fuit esse Matrem Dei, quo titulo illi debetur maximus amor et honor, et cum hæc conjuncta est alia, scilicet singulari modo cooperari Redemptioni; cui fini nihil potest esse magis contrarium, quàm peccatum. Et ex his sequitur ut singulari modo sit Domina omnium, et Regina Angelorum. Nam (ut recte dixit Anselmus), sicut Deus omnia creando Pater est et Dominus omnium, ita *Beata Virgo suis meritis cuncta reparando Mater est et Domina rerum*: non decebat autem Dominam esse inferiorem servis, scilicet sanctis Angelis, in perpetua sanctitate, et vitæ innocentia ac puritate.”

in still greater perfection to the Virgin."¹ And the objection which some are wont to draw from the singularity of this privilege, he successfully answers in this way: "Nor does it matter that grace preserving from immediately contracting sin is granted to none; because, for that very reason the Virgin required that privilege more than any other, and it was, therefore, meet and reasonable that it should be given her; and because it is no way surprising that He grants something more to his Mother than to any one else."²

Thus we see that Suarez (who, moreover, followed and perfectly interpreted the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor) maintained and defended the Immaculate Conception of Mary in the sense indicated by us.

LVI.

AUTHORITY OF PETAU.

Let us now hear Petau. That illustrious and profound theologian, well versed in the writings

¹ "Nullum gratiæ beneficium alicui puræ creaturæ collatum, Virgini negatum est: sed creari in gratia est magnum gratiæ beneficium, quod Adæ et Hevæ collatum est, et perfecta innocentia excludens omnem culpam communicata est Angelis: ergo utrumque multo perfectius concessum est Virgini."

² "Nec refert quod gratia præservans à peccato statim contrahendo nulli concessa sit; tum quia hinc fit Virginem magis indignisse hoc beneficio quam cæteros, ideoque potiori jure atque ratione illi fuisse tribuendum; tum etiam quia nihil mirum est, quod aliquid majus Matri quam cæteris concedat."

of the holy Fathers, persuaded of the truth of our doctrine by the host of arguments in its favor, principally drawn from tradition, and strongly influenced by the unanimous and universal eagerness of the faithful to embrace it, speaks thus of it in his esteemed work entitled, *Dogmata Theologica*:¹ "Above all, I am induced to be of that mind by reason of the common opinion of all the faithful who have it deeply rooted in their inmost souls, and testify by offices and every other sign, that nothing has been created by God more chaste, more pure, more innocent, more remote, in a word, from all filth and stain of sin than that Virgin; and, furthermore, that she had nothing whatever to do with hell and its ruler the devil, neither with damnation or any sort of offence to God."²

LVII.

AUTHORITY OF CORNEILLE DE LA PIERRE.

Corneille de la Pierre pronounces no less clearly in favor of our opinion; for he hesitates not to as-

¹ Lib. XIV, cap. 2, No. 10.

² "Movet autem me ut in eam sim partem propensior, communis maximè sensus fidelium omnium, qui hoc intimis mentibus alteque defixum habent, et quibus possunt indicia, officiisque testantur, nihil illà Virgine castius, purius, innocentius, alienius denique ab omni sorde et labe peccati procreatum à Deo fuisse; tum verò nihil cum inferis et horum rectore diabolo, adeoque cum qualicumque Dei offensa, et damnatione commune unquam fuisse."

sert, on the authority of Suarez, Canisius, the learned Sebastian Barradi, and others, that it is a common belief amongst all the faithful, that Mary was preserved from original sin; and he gives the reason by adding: "This entire purity became the Mother of God, for who can believe that the Mother of God had ever been the devil's daughter and the slave of sin?"¹ and then he concludes: "She was therefore endowed with the purest sanctity in her conception, but received from Christ's majesty, in the Incarnation, an immense increase of sanctity. And this is what is meant by the word *splendebat*, for which the Septuagint use ἐξέλαμπεν ὡς φέγγος, that is *brilliant as lightning*, as if the Blessed Virgin in conceiving Christ, received from Him a glorious effulgence and splendor of sanctity; that she in her own conception received the brightness of the same Christ, but that now she should be refulgent with surpassing splendor, yea, the brilliancy of the lightning, who before was clear and bright."²

¹ "Hæc omnimoda puritas decebat Matrem Dei. Quis enim credat Matrem Dei aliquando fuisse servam peccati et filiam diaboli?"

² "Ipsa ergo in Conceptione integram sanctitatem, in Incarnatione verò ingens sanctitatis incrementum à Christi sui majestate accepit. Et hoc significat vox *splendebat* pro qua vertunt Septuaginta ἐξέλαμπεν ὡς φέγγος; id est resplendebat quasi fulgor, quasi Beata Virgo concipiens Christum, ab eo illustrem sanctitatis splendorem et fulgorem accepit, quæ in primo sui conceptu ejusdem nitorem acceperat, ut jam miro splendore fulgeret, imò fulguraret quæ ante planè nitebat et fulgebat."

LVIII.

CARDINAL BELLARMINE IS FAVORABLE TO THE PIOUS OPINION THAT
MARY WAS EXEMPT FROM THE ORIGINAL STAIN.

With respect to Bellarmine, although he wrote no particular book in defence of Mary's special privilege, the occasion being perhaps wanting, nevertheless he stated and openly declared in his Controversies:¹ "It is the pious belief of the greater portion of the Church that the Blessed Virgin was conceived without original sin;" and he adds: "which even our adversaries Luther and Erasmus confess, the former in his sermon on the Feast of the Conception, the latter in his Apology addressed to Albertum Pium Carpensem."² And Cardinal Sfondrate specifies that in the year 1617, a Congregation of Cardinals having been held in presence of the Pope Paul V, to discuss the question of the Conception of Mary, the most pious Cardinal there gave it as his opinion that Mary was exempt from original sin; an opinion whose truth he clearly demonstrated, and even supported it by miracles, citing amongst others this which follows: "Ships which had not the sign of the

¹ Tom. 2, lib. 3, cap. 16.

² "In majori parte Ecclesiæ piè credi B. Virginem sine peccato originali conceptam;" . . . "quod etiam ex adversariis fatetur Lutherus et Erasmus, ille in sermone *de Festo Conceptionis*, iste in Apologia ad Albertum Pium Carpensem."

Immaculate Conception were wrecked and sunk, whilst those which had an image of the Immaculate Virgin did happily reach the shore.”¹ Thus, wherever it happened that Bellarmine had occasion to speak of this lofty privilege of Mary, far from being silent, he openly admitted it and took up its defence.

LIX.

TESTIMONY OF BARRADI.

As we have mentioned the name of the famous Sebastian Barradi, we must be permitted to bring forward his evidence, which is of great weight. Fathoming² those words of Ecclesiasticus: “My abode is in the full assembly of the Saints,”³ which the Church, in her Liturgy, applies to the Blessed Virgin, he thus expresses himself: “The praise of the Blessed Virgin has not its proper plenitude, unless we say that, over and above the merits of all the Saints, immunity from original sin was granted to her. In this consists that plenitude of the Saints wherein she abides. ‘My abode is in the full assembly of the Saints.’”⁴ Assuredly, nothing clearer

¹ “Naves quæ signo Immaculatæ Conceptionis caruere, naufragio sepultæ sunt, illis tantùm feliciter appulsis, quibus Immaculatæ Virginis imago pro castoribus fuit.”

² Ecclesi. xxiv, 16.

³ In Cant. Moysis, Lect. III, sect. 8, adnot. 6.

⁴ “Beatæ Virginis laus plenitudinem, in qua gradum figat, non habet, nisi dicamus ultra Sanctorum omnium merita concessa illi

or more precise could be said, in support of the doctrine that Mary was in her Conception exempt from original sin.

LX.

FATHER CORIO AN ILLUSTRIOUS DEFENDER OF THE PIOUS OPINION—
CARDINAL GERDIL ALSO PROFESSES THE SAME DOCTRINE.

Amongst the Barnabite theologians who have written and published books in praise of Mary, the learned Father D. Aimon Corio deserves particular notice. This religious, highly esteemed by the sovereign Pontiffs Alexander VII and Clement IX, taught and maintained in his Commentaries on the Pentateuch, as often as the occasion presented itself, the pious opinion of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, so much so that Father Meazza, the Theatine, took from them the sentences which compose the Calendar (*diario*) of the Immaculate Conception, referred to by Vezzosi.”¹

Such was also the doctrine of the immortal Cardinal Gerdil, as we see from the notes and observations which he added to the work of the illustrious Bishop of Arezzo, Monseigneur Albergotti, entitled *The Way of Holiness*. The learned Cardinal was so zealous for the propagation of this pious opinion,

fuisse ab originali peccato immunitatem. In hac assertione sita est Sanctorum plenitudo in qua detinetur. In plenitudine Sanctorum detentio mea.”

¹ *Writers of the Theatine Order*, vol. ii, p. 51.

that, at his request, there was added by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, to these words of the second lessons of the office of St. Maximus : "and to promote devotion to the Mother of God, whose distinguished servant he always was, he boldly maintained her virginity and maternity,"¹ the well-known passage from that same holy Father which we have already given elsewhere : "She was, therefore, an abode manifestly fit for Christ, not on account of her body, but because of original grace."

LXI.

ALL THE UNIVERSITIES HAVE ADOPTED THIS OPINION.

The theologians have at all times found an echo in the most famous universities of the Catholic world, namely, those of Paris, Cologne, Mayence, Alcalá, Saragossa, Compostella, Grenada, Toledo, as also in the academies of Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Portugal ; so that it may be said that there has not been a single theological institution in any part of the world, which did not profess the laudable purpose of maintaining and defending the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

¹ "Atque ad augendam erga Deiparam religionem, ejus eximius cultor semper fuit, ejus virginitatem atque maternitatem luculenter assoruit," "eamque idoneum planè Christo habitaculum, non pro habitu corporis, sed pro gratia originali prædicavit."

LXII.

POPES AND BISHOPS, MONARCHS AND NATIONS FAVORABLE TO THE
PIOUS OPINION.

Not only the theologians, Catholic academies and universities, but the sovereign Pontiffs, as we have shown in its place, the most learned bishops, monarchs and nations, not to speak of the religious orders, referred to elsewhere, have all declared themselves favorable to the opinion of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. As regards the bishops, it suffices to know that almost the whole episcopal body of the Catholic and, then, flourishing kingdom of Spain, addressed their fervent and respectful supplications to Clement XII, beseeching the Holy See to define as an article of faith the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This we learn from the erudite Jesuit, Father Giorgi, whose account of this important petition we here give verbatim. In his Annotations on the Life of Lagomarsini, written by Father Massolari, he thus speaks: "I cannot help apprising the gentle reader in this place (he here speaks of Father Budrolio, another illustrious defender of the cause of Mary) of a certain auspicious event, which fills me, while I write, with very great pleasure, for that all may apply themselves with greater zeal to venerate and defend the most pure Conception of the Blessed Virgin. It happened, unexpectedly, that as I was

turning over a neglected heap of papers, thickly covered with dust, in the house of a family of the lowest condition, I met with a manuscript volume written by Ludovico Andrutio, who had deserved well of the Catholic faith by other works already published ; in this volume he proposed to defend the most pure Conception of the Mother of God, with the intention of publishing the work, had he lived longer. Two other volumes were afterwards discovered, containing the autograph letters of almost all the Bishops of Spain, of the Academies and of the Religious Orders, in which they earnestly petitioned the Sovereign Pontiff Clement XII to assert by a solemn decree *ex cathedra*, the spotless Conception of the Mother of God, so that no one may hereafter be at liberty to judge as he pleases, by his own private opinion, concerning this singular prerogative of the Virgin, but must deem it unlawful to hold the contrary opinion, the matter being decided by the most solemn decree of the Church. Knowing that these documents furnished a strong support for a cause the most excellent, and also that the unanimous consent of so many bishops furnished a new argument for the Pontiff who can neither deceive nor be deceived when he speaks '*ex cathedra*,' I thought I could not do better than inform the most eminent and illustrious Cardinal Hyacinth Gerdil of the whole matter, and earnestly entreat him, that, in consideration of his great

piety towards the Mother of God, and his singular kindness to my unworthy self, he might be pleased to lay before the most holy Pontiff of the Church, Pius VII, the plan which it seemed to me should be adopted in this affair; that, as it could not be doubted but these volumes had been formerly taken from the Apostolic Cabinet, he would instantly command them to be sent back, some just remuneration being given to those who had hitherto owned them; which, when he had approved, I then begged the assent of the most holy Pontiff, who sent me, according to his usual custom, this most courteous reply: ¹

¹ "Facere hoc loco non possum, quin humanissimos lectores felicissimi cujusdam eventus, qui dum hæc scribo mirifica me voluptate cumulavit, certiores faciam, quo ad B. Virginis purissimum Conceptum tuendum, venerandumque ardentiori studio semper incumbant. Insuperanti enim mihi contigit, ut dum neglectam quamdam, sordibusque obsitam scriptorum molem apud infimæ sortis familiam evolverem, in scriptum volumen incidere exaratum à Ludovico Andrutio, aliis editis jam operibus de catholica fide egregiè merito, quo Deiparæ purissimum Conceptum tuori sibi proposuerat, statueratque illud in lucem emittere, si diutius vivere contigisset. Tum duo alia reperta volumina, quibus autographæ litteræ omnium totius fere Hispaniæ Episcoporum, Academicarum, Religiosorum Ordinum continebantur, quibus Clementem XII P. M. enixe rogabant, ut solemniter ex cathedra judicio Deiparæ sine ulla labe Conceptum assereret, ut de singulari hoc Virginis ornamento, non jam privato sensu pro arbitrio suo judicare quis posset, sed ut de re Ecclesiæ firmissimo judicio definita, nefas esse duceret contrariè sentire. Quibus profectò testimoniis cum non solum validissimum optimæ causæ parari presidium agnoscerem, sed novum pro Pontifice, cum ex cathedra loquitur, fallere

“I have made known that these interesting autographs might be procured by informing me of the sum to be given in payment, etc. The Holy Father was much pleased to hear that the original documents could be recovered. Rome, 21st August, 1801. H. CARDINAL GERDIL.”

Here ends Giorgi's text.

LXIII.

THE COMMON CONSENT OF THE FAITHFUL PROVES THE TRUTH OF THE
OPINION THAT MARY WAS EXEMPT FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

Most assuredly, the unanimous desire of so many eminent prelates and the full consent of the Catholic world are quite sufficient not only to justify, but in some measure to *canonize* our opinion. This way of thinking we have learned from the great St. Augustine, whom we follow as a guide: “The

et falli nescio argumentum ex unanimi tot Episcoporum consensione arbitror, nihil antiquius habui, quam ut de tota re amplissimum Cardinalem Hyacinthum Gerdilium, omni pietatis et doctrinæ laude præstantem, certiorer facerem, enixeque illum roga-rem, ut pro summa in Deiparam, qua præstat pietate, et pro singulari illa, qua me immerentem benevolentia complectitur, sanctissimo Ecclesiæ Pontifici Pio VII consilium, quod mihi hæc in re capiendum videbatur, exponere non gravaretur, ut quando ex Apostolico Tabulario hæc olim fuisse deprompta volumina dubitari non poterat, remitti Romam illico juberet, justâ quadam remuneratione iis, qui ea hæcenus retinuerunt, propositâ. Quod cum ille probasset, tum SS. Pontificis adsensu implorato, sic datis ad me humanissimis, ut solet, litteris respondit.”

authority of the Scriptures is not required to prove this true; does not the general consent," says he in his 143d letter to Marcellinus, "by a palpable reason, proclaim its truth, so that it would be considered absurd to contradict it?" In his 164th letter, addressed to Evodus, the holy Doctor adds: "Almost all the Church is of this opinion (however the tradition may have come), which we know it would not have received on light grounds, although no authority of Canonical Scripture can be produced to support it."¹

That the common consent of the faithful now declares Mary's Conception Immaculate, is proved by the custom established in the Church, from time immemorial, of honoring the Virgin under this glorious title; it is attested by the scandal given to pious and devout Catholics by those who have dared to preach and defend the contrary opinion; it is established by the zeal shown by the faithful to see Mary universally hailed as Immaculate; finally, it is demonstrated by the common practice of honoring and invoking Mary conceived

¹ "Neque enim ut videamus, quàm hoc sit verum, Scripturarum auctoritas necessaria est, ac non sensus ipse communis ita verum esse perspicuâ ratione proclamat, ut quisquis contradixerit, demetissimus habeatur?" "Ecclesia fere tota consentit, quod eam non inaniter credidisse credendum est, undecumque hoc traditum sit, etiamsi canonicarum Scripturarum hinc expressa non proferatur auctoritas."

without sin by means of *triduos* and novenas, whenever there is a public calamity to be averted, or a particular grace desired, either public or private.

LXIV.

THE UNANIMOUS CONSENT OF THE FAITHFUL IS PREPARING A FORMAL DEFINITION ON THE PRESENT QUESTION.

If, then, according to St. Augustine, it should suffice, to make a thing be regarded as true, that it be affirmed and considered true by the general, or almost general consent of the faithful; surely this condition is not wanting as regards the opinion of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which is, as we have seen, admitted and professed by all, or nearly all. And such being the case, would it not be rashness or folly to contradict that opinion? In fact, it is wholly incredible that God would have permitted nearly all the Church, scattered as it is, to be mistaken on a subject of such importance. But if God, the sovereign truth, has caused to spring up amongst the faithful throughout the whole Catholic world, this emulation in propagating the belief that Mary did not contract even the shadow of original sin, it must be inferred that the opinion which attributes to Mary a privilege so extraordinary, is the only true one, and that God has, by his heavenly inspirations, everywhere disposed the faithful to believe and profess it, in order

to smooth the path of his Vicar on earth towards a solemn definition, after which it shall no longer be held or professed as a simple opinion, but as a firm and substantial article of faith. So also thought the illustrious Suarez,¹ who, after having said that "this truth, namely, that the Virgin was conceived without original sin, can be defined by the Church whenever she considers it expedient," hastens to add: "It is sufficient for this definition that some supernatural truth be implicitly contained in tradition or Scripture, that the general consent of the Church increasing (as by it the Spirit of wisdom often explains traditions, or declares Scripture), she may at length make her definition, which has the force of a certain revelation, through the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit."²

LXV.

PROPHECY CONTAINED IN THE FORTIETH PSALM, RELATING TO THIS
PRIVILEGE OF MARY.

And since the authority of this universal consent

¹ In 3 part. D. Thomæ, quæst. 27, art. 2, sect. VI.

² "Veritatem hanc, scilicet Virginem esse conceptam sine peccato originali, posse definiri ab Ecclesia quando id expedire iudicaverit;" "Ad hanc definitionem satis est ut aliqua supernaturalis veritas in traditione vel Scriptura implicite contenta sit, ut crescente communi consensu Ecclesiæ, per quam sæpe Spiritus sanctus traditiones explicat, vel Scripturam declarat, tandem possit definitionem suam adhibere, quæ vim habet cujusdam revelationis, propter infallibilem Spiritus sancti assistentiam."

of the faithful is no wise weakened by the dissent of a small number who think otherwise, who do not see that the well-known rule of St. Vincent de Lerins may undoubtedly be applied to this particular case? In fact, it may be truly said that the opinion of the Immaculate Conception of Mary has been and still is professed and admitted *always, everywhere, and by all*. To say the truth, this universal consent of Catholics in believing that the Conception of Mary was exempt from the original stain, presents so strong an argument in favor of this pious belief, that I should be much surprised if, in these days when it has acquired so much splendor and obtained so many victories, theologians could still be found who could, with an unprejudiced mind, and a safe conscience, venture even to raise a doubt on the subject. Must not all uncertainty on this point vanish before the text of the royal Prophet (Ps. xl, ver. 13), which the most learned commentators regard as relating to the Blessed Virgin, who speaks to God in these terms: "But me thou hast received for the sake of innocence, and thou hast confirmed me in thy sight for ever."¹ As though she would have said to God: "Thou lovest me, O my God, because thou, having the power, didst save me from the empire of Satan

¹ "Me autem propter innocentiam suscepisti, et confirmasti me in conspectu tuo in æternum."

thine enemy, permitting me not to be defiled with original sin; thou hast endowed me with a multitude of other signal graces, and chosen me for thy Mother, because thou didst find me innocent and pure, as became the Mother of a God." "Certainly, a very probable reason," says Lorin, in his Commentaries on this psalm, "that God, since he could prepare such a Mother for himself, has chosen so to do, and has so reserved her for himself that the devil had never any claim upon her. To the devil she was obnoxious, because of the preventing grace which saved her from being ever subject to him. Christ was always God, but neither did his humanity exist previous to its union with the divinity, that through innocence it might be taken, since (I repeat) it was not until it was assumed. God made a mother such as I have mentioned, that he might, on that account, choose her to be his mother; or because he wished to choose her, he made her such a mother."¹

¹ "Valde profectò probabilis ratio, quum talem sibi Deus matrem præparare potu erit, etiam voluisse, ac ita sibi totam vindicasse, ut ab omni in perpetuum jure dæmonis liberaret. Cui, nisi præveniendò liberaretur, obnoxia erat, ac subjicienda fuerat. Christus semper fuit Deus, nec exstitit humanitas priusquam uniretur divinitati, ut propter innocentiam susciperetur, quum, inquam, non fuerit antequam susciperetur. Deus matrem talem fecit, qualem dixi, ut ideo sibi matrem elegerit, seu quia volebat eligere, matrem talem fecit."

LXVI.

OUR DOCTRINE IS NONE THE LESS VALID, BECAUSE THE CHURCH HAS NOT YET DEFINED THE QUESTION—THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL, AND MIRACLES WROUGHT BY IT.

But, some will say, this *præ* opinion has not yet been formally defined by the Church. That is quite true; but does this prudent conduct of the Church prejudice our opinion, or does it deprive it of that force which tradition secures to it, and which causes it to be commonly professed and believed by all the faithful? Has the Holy See omitted to favor, to protect and to propagate this belief, although it has hitherto abstained from defining it as an article of faith? And the reigning Pontiff, Gregory XVI, now filling the Apostolic Chair with as much glory to himself as profit to the Church, has he not granted, through the sacred Congregation of Rites, to any of the churches of France, America, England, Germany and Italy, at their own request, an Indult to introduce into the Preface of the 8th December, the words *et te in Immaculata Conceptione*, just as the Franciscans have it in theirs? And is not the truth of this opinion also proved by the wonderful vision and the rapid propagation of the well-known miraculous medal, with the effigy of *Mary conceived without sin*, revealed at Paris, in the year 1830, to a simple maiden who, from humility, concealed

her name; a medal which pious Christians wear as a permanent source of spiritual and temporal graces, which they everywhere obtain through the intercession of the Mother of God, venerated, revered and invoked under this title, which is so dear to her? And the famous conversion effected under our own eyes, at the beginning of this present year (1842), of the Jew Ratisbon, who, for having consented to wear the miraculous medal at the earnest request of a friend, was publicly favored, in the Church of St. Andrew *delle Fratte*, with a sudden apparition of Mary, which enlightened his mind; so that, from being an inveterate enemy even of the Christian name, he immediately became a fervent Catholic: does not that conversion, I repeat, prove at once the certitude and the utility of this precious devotion? It is only to manifest truth that God employs prodigies; and I consider that He has wrought so many and such extraordinary miracles in favor of this renowned medal, in order to authorize the devotion connected with it, and to extend the belief throughout all the Church.

LXVII.

We would not end here were we to lay before the reader all the thoughts and reflections which crowd on our mind in support of this doctrine. But as we proposed to ourselves to write on this

subject, not a complete work, but merely a short and simple treatise, we think that what we have now said is quite sufficient for our purpose, and that we ought not to say more. It were superfluous to express the ardent aspirations of our heart. If, during the short space of time that remains for us to live, it would seem proper to the Holy Apostolic See, ever guided by the light of the Holy Spirit, to define the important question of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, we would then close our eyes in peace; and we are quite confident that such an act would be the harbinger of multiplied graces, and blessings, which Mary would obtain for Rome and the entire Church, whose patroness and advocate she ever is. Meanwhile, if in this little work we have not treated Mary's cause as it deserved to be treated, we humbly ask Her pardon, beseeching her to accept, with motherly kindness, the homage of our filial devotion, and to attribute the faults which may be found in these pages to the insufficiency of our talents rather than our want of good will; for it shall ever be our special aim and object to defend and maintain the sublime privilege, exclusively reserved for Mary, of having been exempt in her blessed Conception from even the shade of original sin.

APPENDIX.

DISCOURSE

ON

MARY'S IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF

ST. ALPHONSUS DE LIGUORI,

FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST HOLY REDEEMER.

[New Translation.]

HOW BECOMING IT WAS THAT EACH OF THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS
SHOULD PRESERVE MARY FROM ORIGINAL SIN.

GREAT indeed was the injury entailed on Adam and all his posterity by his accursed sin; for at the same time that he thereby, for his own great misfortune, lost grace, he also forfeited all the other precious gifts with which he had originally been enriched, and drew down upon himself and all his descendants, the hatred of God, and an accumulation of evils. But from this general misfortune, God was pleased to exempt that Blessed Virgin, whom He had destined to be the Mother of the Second Adam—Jesus Christ—who was to repair the evil done by the first. Now, let us see how becoming it was that God, and all the three Divine Persons should thus preserve her from it; that the Father should preserve her as His Daughter, the Son as His Mother, and the Holy Ghost as His Spouse.

First point.—In the first place it was becoming that the Eternal Father should preserve Mary from the stain of original sin, because she was His daughter, and His first-born daughter, as she herself declares: "I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures."¹ For this text is applied to Mary by sacred interpreters, the holy Fathers, and by the Church, on the solemnity of her Conception. For be she the first-born, inasmuch as she was predestined in the Divine decrees, together with the Son, before all creatures, according to the Scotists; or be she the first-born of grace as the predestined Mother of the Redeemer, after the prevision of sin, according to the Thomists, nevertheless all agree in calling her the first-born of God. This being the case, it was quite becoming that Mary should never have been the slave of Lucifer, but only, and always, possessed by her Creator; and this she in reality was, as we are assured by herself: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways."² Hence Denis of Alexandria rightly calls Mary 'the one and only daughter of life.'³ She is the one and only daughter of life, in contradistinction to others who, being born in sin, are daughters of death.

Besides this, it was quite becoming that the Eternal Father should create her in His grace, since He destined her to be the repairer of the lost world and the mediatrix of peace between men and God; and as such, she is looked upon and spoken of by the holy fathers, and in par-

¹ Ergo ex ore Altissimi prodivi, primogenita ante omnem creaturam.—*Eccl.* xxiv, 5.

² Dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum.—*Prov.* viii, 22.

³ Una . . . et sola virgo, filia vitæ.—*Epist. Compresbyteri Eccles. Alexand.*

ticular by Saint John Damascene, who thus addresses her: "O Blessed Virgin, thou wast born that thou mightest minister to the salvation of the whole world."¹ For this reason Saint Bernard says, "that Noah's ark was a type of Mary; for as, by its means, men were preserved from the deluge, so are we all saved by Mary from the shipwreck of sin; but with the difference, that in the ark few were saved, and by Mary the whole human race was rescued from death." * Therefore, in a sermon found amongst the works of Saint Athanasius, she is called "the new Eve, and the Mother of life;"² and not without reason, for the first was the Mother of death, but the most Blessed Virgin was the Mother of true life. Saint Theophanius of Nice, addressing Mary, says, "Hail, thou who hast taken away Eve's sorrow!"³ Saint Basil of Seleucia calls her the peace-maker between men and God: "Hail, thou who art appointed umpire between God and men!"⁴ and Saint Ephrem, the pacificator of the whole world: "Hail, reconciler of the whole world!"⁵

¹ O desiderabilissima femina, ac terque beata! . . . in mundum prodisti, ut orbis universi saluti obsequaris.—*Serm. i in Nat. B. V.*

² Sicut . . . per illam omnes evaserunt diluvium, sic per istam peccati naufragium . . . Per illam, paucorum facta est liberatio: per istam humani generis salvatio.—*Serm. de B. Maria.*

³ Nova Heva, Mater vitæ nuncupata.—*Int. op. S. Athan. Serm. de Annunt. Deip.*

⁴ Ave Domina Virgo, ave purissima, ave receptaculum Dei, ave candelabrum luminis, Adæ revocatio, Evæ redemptio, mons sanctum, manifestum sanctuarium, et sponsarium immortalitatis.—*In Annunc. B. M. V. Hymn.*

⁵ Ave gratia plena, Dei ac hominum mediatrix, quo medius patries inimicitiae tollatur, ac coelestibus, terrena coeant ac uniantur.—*Orat. in S. M. et de Inc. D. N. J. C.*

⁶ Ave totius terrarum orbis conciliatrix efficacissima.—*Serm. de Laud. Virg.*

But now, it certainly would not be becoming to choose an enemy to treat of peace with the offended person, and still less an accomplice in the crime itself. Saint Gregory says, "that an enemy cannot undertake to appease his judge, who is at the same time the injured party; for if he did, instead of appeasing him, he would provoke him to greater wrath." And, therefore, as Mary was to be the mediatrix of peace between men and God, it was of the utmost importance that she should not herself appear as a sinner, and as an enemy of God, but that she should appear in all things as a friend, and free from every stain.

Still more was it becoming that God should preserve her from original sin, for He destined her to crush the head of that infernal serpent, which, by seducing our first parents, entailed death upon all men; and this our Lord foretold: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head."¹ But if Mary was to be that valiant woman brought into the world to conquer Lucifer, certainly it was not becoming that he should first conquer her, and make her his slave; but it was reasonable that she should be preserved from all stain, and even momentary subjection to her opponent. The proud spirit endeavoured to infect the most pure soul of this Virgin with his venom, as he had already infected the whole human race. But praised and ever blessed be God, who, in His infinite goodness, pre-endowed her for this purpose with such great grace, that remaining always free from any guilt of sin, she was ever able to beat down and confound his pride, as Saint Augustine, or whoever may be the author of the commen-

¹ Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum.—*Gen.* iii, 15.

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tary on Genesis, says: "Since the devil is the head of original sin, this head it was that Mary crushed; for sin never had any entry into the soul of this Blessed Virgin, which was consequently free from all stain."¹ And Saint Bonaventure more expressly says, "It was becoming that the Blessed Virgin Mary, by whom our shame was to be blotted out, and by whom the devil was to be conquered, should never even for a moment have been under his dominion."²

But above all, it principally became the Eternal Father to preserve this His daughter unspotted by Adam's sin, as Saint Bernardine of Sienna remarks, because he destined her to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son: "Thou wast pre-ordained in the mind of God, before all creatures, that thou mightest beget God himself as man."³ If then for no other end, at least for the honor of his Son, who was God, it was reasonable that the Father should create Mary free from every stain. The angelic Saint Thomas says, that all things that are ordained for God should be holy and free from stain: "Holiness is to be attributed to those things which are ordained for God."⁴ Hence when David was planning the temple of Jerusalem, on a scale

¹ Cum peccati originalis caput sit diabolus, tale caput Maria contrivit, quia nulla peccati subjectio ingressum habuit in animam Virginis, et ideo ab omni macula immunis fuit.—*Cit. loc. Gen.* †

² Congruum erat ut beata Virgo Maria, per quam auferetur nobis opprobrium, vinceret diabolum, ut nec ei succumberet ad modicum.—*Lib. iii, Dist. 3, art. 2, q. 1.*

³ Tu, ante omnem creaturam, in mente Dei præordinata fuisti, ut omnium fœminarum castissima, Deum ipsum hominem verum, ex tua carne procreares.—*Serm. de Concep. B. M. V. art. iii, cap. 3.*

⁴ Sanctitas illis rebus attribuitur, quæ in Deum ordinantur.—*1 p. q. xxxvi, art. 1, concl.*

of magnificence becoming a God, he said, "For a house is prepared not for man, but for God."¹ How rich more reasonable then is it not, to suppose that the Sovereign Architect, who destined Mary to be the Mother of His own Son, adorned her soul with all most precious gifts, that she might be a dwelling worthy of a God! Denis the Carthusian says, "that God, the artificer of all things, when constructing a worthy dwelling for his Son, adorned it with all attractive graces."² And the Holy Church herself, in the following prayer, assures us that God prepared the body and soul of the Blessed Virgin, so as to be a worthy dwelling on earth for His only-begotten Son. "Almighty and Eternal God, who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary, that she might become a worthy habitation for thy Son, &c."³

We know that a man's highest honor is to be born of noble parents: "And the glory of children are their fathers."⁴ Hence in the world, the reputation of being possessed of only a small fortune, and little learning, is more easily tolerated than that of being of low birth; for whilst a poor man may become rich by his industry, an

¹ Neque enim homini præparatur habitatio, sed Deo.—1 *Paralip.* xxix, 1.

² Omnium artifex Deus, ad ipsius formationem in utero supernaturaliter concurrens, Filio suo dignum habitaculum fabricaturus, eam intrinsecus, omnium gratificantium charismatum, et dignificantium habituum plenitudine, adornavit.—*De Laud. V.* lib. ii, art. 2.

³ Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui gloriosæ Virginis Matris Mariæ corpus et animam, ut dignum Filii tui habitaculum effici mereretur, Spiritu Sancto cooperante præparasti, &c.

⁴ Gloria filiorum patres eorum.—*Prov.* xvii, 6.

ignorant man learned by study, it is very difficult for a person of humble origin to attain the rank of nobility; but even should he attain it, his birth can always be made a subject of reproach to him. How then can we suppose that God, who could cause His Son to be born of a noble mother, by preserving her from sin, would on the contrary permit Him to be born of one infected by it, and thus enable Lucifer always to reproach Him with the shame of having a mother who had once been his slave, and the enemy of God? No, certainly, the Eternal Father did not permit this, but He well provided for the honor of His Son, by preserving His Mother always Immaculate, that she might be a Mother becoming such a Son. The Greek church bears witness to this, saying, "that God, by a singular providence, caused the most Blessed Virgin to be as perfectly pure from the very first moment of her existence, as it was fitting that she should be, who was to be the worthy Mother of Christ."¹

It is a common axiom amongst theologians, that no gift was ever bestowed on any creature with which the Blessed Virgin was not also enriched. St. Bernard says on this subject, "It is certainly not wrong to suppose that that which has evidently been bestowed, even on only a few, was not denied to so great a Virgin."² Saint Thomas of Villanova says, "Nothing was ever granted to any Saint which did not shine in a much higher degree in Mary,

¹ Providentia singulari perfecit, ut SS. Virgo, ab ipso vitæ suæ principio, tam omnino existeret pura quam decebat illam, quæ Christo digna mater existeret.—*In Men. die xxv Martii.* †

² Quod . . . vel paucis mortalium constat fuisse collatum, fas certe non est suspicari tantæ Virgini esse negatum.—*Ep. clxxiv ad. Can. Lugd.*

from the very first moment of her existence."¹ And as it is true that "there is an infinite difference between the Mother of God, and the servants of God,"² according to the celebrated saying of Saint John Damascene, we must certainly suppose, according to the doctrine of Saint Thomas, that "God conferred privileges of grace in every way greater on His Mother than on His servants."³ And now admitting this, Saint Anselm, the great defender of the Immaculate Mary, takes up the question and says, "Was the wisdom of God unable to form a pure dwelling, and to remove every stain of human nature from it?"⁴ Perhaps God could not prepare a clean habitation for His Son, by preserving it from the common contagion? "God," continues the same Saint, "could preserve angels in heaven spotless, in the midst of the devastation that surrounded them, was He then unable to preserve the Mother of His Son, and the Queen of angels, from the common fall of men?"⁵ And I may here add, that as God could grant Eve the grace to come immaculate into the world, could He not then grant the same favor to Mary!

¹ Nihil . . . usquam sanctorum, speciali privilegio concessum est, quod non a principio vitæ, accumulatus prefulgeat in Maria.—*In fest. Assump. B. V. conc. i.*

² Infinitum Dei servorum ac Matris discrimen est.—*Hom. i. in Dorm. B. V. M.*

³ Rationabiliter . . . creditur quod illa quæ genuit Unigenitum a Patre plenum gratiæ et veritatis, præ omnibus aliis, majora privilegia gratiæ acceperit.—3 p. q. xxvii, art. 1, concl.

⁴ Inscia ne fuit et impotens, sapientia Dei et virtus, mundum sibi habitaculum condere, remota omni labe conditionis humanæ! —*De Concept. B. M. V.*

⁵ Angelis aliis peccantibus, bonos a peccatis servavit; et feminam, matrem suam mox futuram, ab aliorum peccatis exortem servare non potuit!—*Ib.*

Yes, indeed ! God could do it, and did it ; for on every account "it was becoming," as the same Saint Anselm says, "that that Virgin, on whom the Eternal Father intended to bestow His only-begotten Son, should be adorned with such purity, as not only to exceed that of all men and angels, but exceeding any purity that can be conceived, after that of God."¹ And Saint John Damascene speaks in still clearer terms ; for he says, "that our Lord had preserved the soul, together with the body of the Blessed Virgin, in that purity which became her who was to receive a God into her womb ; for, as He is holy, He only reposes in holy places."² And thus the Eternal Father could well say to His beloved daughter, "As the lily among thorns ; so is my love among the daughters."³ My daughter, amongst all my other daughters, thou art as a lily in the midst of thorns ; for they are all stained with sin, but thou wast always Immaculate, and always my beloved.

Second point.—In the second place it was becoming that the Son should preserve Mary from sin, as being His Mother. No one can choose his mother ; but should such a thing ever be granted to any one, who is there who, if able to choose a queen, would wish for a slave ? If able to choose a noble lady, would he wish for a servant ? Or if able to choose a friend of God, would he wish for His enemy ? If then the Son of God alone could choose a

¹ Decens erat, ut ea puritate qua major sub Deo nequit intelligi, Virgo illa niteret, cui Deus Pater, unicum Filium suum . . . ita dare disponebat.—*De Concep. Virg.* cap. xviii.

² animum una cum corpore Virginem conservasset, veluti decebat illam, quæ sinu suo conceptura Deum erat, qui, cum Ipse sanctus sit, in sanctis requiescit.—*De Fide orth.* lib. iv, cap. 14.

³ Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias.—*Cant.* ii, 2.

Mother according to His own heart—His own liking, we must consider, as a matter of course, that He chose one becoming a God. Saint Bernard says, “that the Creator of men, becoming Man, must have selected Himself a Mother whom He knew became Him.”¹ And as it was becoming that a most pure God should have a Mother pure from all sin, He created her spotless. Saint Bernardine of Sienna, speaking of the different degrees of sanctification, says, that “the third is that obtained by becoming the Mother of God; and that this sanctification consists in the entire removal of original sin. This is what took place in the Blessed Virgin: truly God created Mary such, both as to the eminence of her nature, and the perfection of grace with which he endowed her, as became Him who was to be born of her.”² Here we may apply the words of the Apostle to the Hebrews: “For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest; holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners.”³ A learned author observes, that, according to Saint Paul, it was fitting that our Blessed Redeemer should not only be separated from sin, but also from sinners; according to the explanation of Saint Thomas, who says, “that it was necessary that He,

¹ Factor hominum, ut homo fieret, nasciturus de homine talem sibi ex omnibus debuit deligere, imo condere matrem, qualem, et se decere sciebat, et sibi noverat placituram.—*Sup. Miss. Hom. ii.*

² Tertia fuit sanctificatio maternalis, et hæc removet culpam originalem . . . Hæc fuit in B. Virgine Maria matre Dei. Sane Deus . . . talem, tam nobilitate naturæ, quam perfectione gratiæ, condidit matrem, qualem eam decebat habere suam gloriosissimam majestatem.—*Pro. Concep. Im. V. art. i, cap. i.*

³ Talis enim decebat ut nobis esset pontifex, sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus, et excelsior, cœlis factus.—*Heb. vii, 26.*

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who came to take away sins, should be separated from sinners, as to the fault under which Adam lay."¹ But how could Jesus Christ be said to be separated from sinners, if He had a Mother who was a sinner?

Saint Ambrose says, "that Christ chose this vessel into which He was about to descend, not of earth, but from heaven; and He consecrated it a temple of purity."² The Saint alludes to the text of Saint Paul: "The first man was of the earth, earthly: the second man from heaven, heavenly."³ The Saint calls the Divine Mother "a heavenly vessel," not because Mary was not earthly by nature, as heretics have dreamt, but because she was heavenly by grace; she was as superior to the angels of heaven in sanctity and purity, as it was becoming that she should be, in whose womb a King of Glory was to dwell. This agrees with that which Saint John the Baptist revealed to Saint Bridget, saying, "It was not becoming that the King of Glory should repose otherwise than in a chosen vessel, exceeding all men and angels in purity."⁴ And to this we may add that which the Eternal Father Himself said to the same Saint: "Mary was a clean and an unclean vessel: clean, for she was all fair; but unclean,

¹ *Opportuit eum, qui peccata venerat tollere, esse a peccatoribus segregatum, quantum ad culpam cui Adam subiacuit.*—3 p. q. iv, art. 6, ad. 2.

² *Non de terra utique, sed de cœlo, vas sibi hoc per quod descenderet Christus elegit, et sacravit templum pudoris.*—*De Inst.* l. cap. v.

³ *Primus homo de terra, terrenus; secundus homo de cœlo, cœlestis*—1 *Cor.* xv, 47.

⁴ *Non decuit Regem gloriæ jacere, nisi in vase purissimo, et mundissimo, et electissimo, præ omnibus Angelis et hominibus.*—*Rev.* lib. i, cap. 31.

because she was born of sinners; though she was conceived without sin that My Son might be born of her without sin."¹ And remark these last words, "Mary was conceived without sin, that the Divine Son might be born of her without sin." Not that Jesus Christ could have contracted sin, but that He might not be reproached with even having a Mother infected with it, who would consequently have been the slave of the devil.

The Holy Ghost says that "the glory of a man is from the honor of his father, and a father without honor is the disgrace of the son;"² "Therefore it was," says an ancient writer, "that Jesus preserved the body of Mary from corruption after death; for it would have redounded to His dishonor had that virginal flesh with which He had clothed Himself become the food of worms;" "For," he adds, "corruption is a disgrace of human nature; and as Jesus was not subject to it, Mary was also exempted; for the flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary."³ But since the corruption of her body would have been a disgrace for Jesus Christ, because He was born of her, how much greater would the disgrace have been had He been born of a mother whose soul was once infected with the corruption of sin? For not only is it true that the flesh of

¹ Maria fuit vas mundum, et non mundum. Mundum vero fuit, quia tota pulchra . . . Sed non mundum fuit, quia . . . de peccatoribus nata est, licet sine peccato concepta, ut Filius Meus de ea, sine peccato nasceretur.—*Rev. lib. v, Exp. Rev. xiii.*

² Gloria enim hominis ex honore patris sui, et dedecus filii pater sine honore.—*Eccles. iii, 13.*

³ Putredo namque et vermis, humanæ est opprobrium conditionis, a quo opprobrio, cum Jesus sit alienus, natura Mariæ excipitur . . . caro enim Jesu, caro est Mariæ.—*De Assump. B. M. V. lib.*

Jesus is the same as that of Mary; "but," adds the same author, "the flesh of our Saviour, even after His resurrection, remained the same that He had taken from His Mother?" "The flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary, and though it was glorified by the glory of His resurrection, yet it remains the same that was taken from Mary."¹ Hence the Abbot Arnold of Chartres says, "The flesh of Mary and that of Christ are one; and, therefore, I consider the glory of the Son as being not so much common to, as one with that of His Mother."² And now if this is true, supposing that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in sin, though the Son could not have contracted its stain, nevertheless His having united flesh to Himself which was once infected with sin, a vessel of uncleanness, and subject to Lucifer, would always have been a blot.

Mary was not only the Mother, but the worthy Mother of our Saviour. She is called so by all the holy Fathers. Saint Bernard says, "Thou alone wast found worthy to be chosen as the one in whose Virginal womb the King of kings should have his first abode."³ Saint Thomas of Villanova says, "Before she conceived, she was already fit to be the Mother of God."⁴ The holy Church herself attests that Mary merited to be the Mother of Jesus Christ, saying, "the Blessed Virgin, who merited to bear

¹ Caro enim Christi, quamvis gloria resurrectionis fuerit magnificata . . . eadem tamen carnis mansit et manet natura, quæ suscepta est de Maria.—*Ib.*

² Una est Mariæ et Christi caro . . . Filii gloriam cum matre, non tam commune iudico, quam eandem.—*De Laud. B. M.*

³ Tu sola inventa es digna, ut in tua virginali aula, Rex regum . . . primam sibi mansionem . . . elegit.—*Depr. ad B. V.*

⁴ Antequam conciperet Filium Dei, jam idonea erat, ut esset Mater Dei.—*Serm. iii, de Nat. B. V.*

in her womb Christ our Lord;"¹ and Saint Thomas Aquinas, explaining these words, says, that "the Blessed Virgin is said to have merited to bear the Lord of all: not that she merited His Incarnation, but that she merited, by the graces she had received, such a degree of purity and sanctity, that she could becomingly be the Mother of God;"² that is to say, Mary could not merit the incarnation of the Eternal Word, but by Divine grace she merited such a degree of perfection as to render her worthy to be the Mother of a God, according to what Saint Peter Damian also writes: "Her singular sanctity, the effect of grace, merited that she alone should be judged worthy to receive a God."³

And now supposing that Mary was worthy to be the Mother of God, "what excellency and what perfection was there that did not become her?"⁴ asks Saint Thomas of Villanova. The angelic Doctor says, "that when God chooses any one for a particular dignity, He renders him fit for it;" whence he adds, "that God, having chosen Mary for His Mother, He also, by His grace, rendered her worthy of this highest of all dignities." "The Blessed Virgin was Divinely chosen to be the Mother of God,

¹ Regina cœli lætare . . . quia quem meruisti portare . . . Resurrexit sicut dixit.—*Antiph. temp. Pasch.*

² Beata Virgo dicitur meruisse portare Dominum omnium; non quia meruit ipsum incarnari, sed quia meruit ex gratia sibi data, illum puritatis et sanctitatis gradum, ut congrue posset esse Mater Dei.—3 p. q. 2, art. xi, ad. 3.

³ Venerabilis Mater Domini, septem Sancti Spiritus donis . . . dotata fuit. Quam utique æterna sapientia . . . talem construxit, quæ digna fieret Illum suscipere.—*Serm. ii, de Nat. B. M. V.*

⁴ Quæ autem excellentia, quæ perfectio, quæ magnitudo decuit eam, ut esset idonea Mater Dei.—*Serm. iii, de Nat. B. M. V.*

and, therefore, we cannot doubt that God had fitted her by His grace for this dignity; and we are assured of it by the angel: "For thou hast found grace with God; behold, thou shalt conceive," &c.¹ And thence the Saint argues that "the Blessed Virgin never committed any actual sin, not even a venial one." "Otherwise," he says, "she would not have been a Mother worthy of Jesus Christ; for the ignominy of the Mother would also have been that of the Son, for He would have had a sinner for His Mother."² And now if Mary, on account of a single venial sin, which does not deprive a soul of Divine grace, would not have been a Mother worthy of God, how much more unworthy would she have been had she contracted the guilt of original sin, which would have made her an enemy of God, and a slave of the devil? And this reflection it was that made Saint Augustine utter those memorable words, that "when speaking of Mary for the honor of our Lord," whom she merited to have for her Son, he would not entertain even the question of sin in her; "for we know," he says, "that through Him, who it is evident was without sin, and whom she merited to conceive and bring forth, she received grace to conquer all sin."³

¹ Beata autem Virgo fuit electa divinitus, ut esset mater Dei; et ideo non est dubitandum quin Deus per suam gratiam, eam ad hoc idoneam reddidit, secundum quod Angelus ad eam dicit, "Invenisti gratiam apud Deum: ecce concipies, &c."—3 p. q. xxvii, art. 4, concl.

² Non . . . fuisset idonea mater Dei, si peccasset aliquando . . . quia . . . ignominia Matris, ad Filium redundasset.—*Ib.*

³ Excepta itaque sancta Virgine Maria, de qua, propter honorem Domini, nullam prorsus eum de peccatis agitur, haberi volo questionem: unde enim scimus, quod ei, plus gratiæ collatum fuerit ad vincendum, omni ex parte peccatum, quæ concipere ac parere

Therefore, as Saint Peter Damian observes, we must consider it as certain "that the Incarnate Word chose Himself a becoming Mother, and one of whom He would not have to be ashamed."¹ Saint Proclus also says, "that He dwelt in a womb which He had created, free from all that might be to His dishonor."² It was no shame to Jesus Christ, when He heard Himself contemptuously called by the Jews the Son of Mary, meaning that He was the Son of a poor woman: "Is not His Mother called Mary?"³ for He came into this world to give us an example of humility and patience. But, on the other hand, it would undoubtedly have been a disgrace, could He have heard the devil say, "Was not His Mother a sinner? was He not born of a wicked Mother, who was once our slave?" It would even have been unbecoming had Jesus Christ been born of a woman whose body was deformed, or crippled, or possessed by devils; but how much more would it have been so had He been born of a woman whose soul had been once deformed by sin, and in the possession of Lucifer?

Ah! indeed, God, who is Wisdom itself, well knew how to prepare Himself a becoming dwelling, in which to reside on earth: "Wisdom hath built herself a house."⁴ "The Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle . . .

meruit, quem constat nullum habuisse peccatum.—*De Nat. et Gratia. contra Pelag. cap. xxvi.*

¹ Quam utique æterna Sapientia . . . talem construxit, quæ digna fieret illum suscipere, et de intemeratæ carnis suæ visceribus procreare.—*Serm. ii, in Nat. B. M. V.*

² Intra viscera, quæ citra omnem dedecoris notam comdiderat, inhabitat.—*Hom. de Nat. D. N. J. C.*

³ Nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria?—*Matth. xiii, 55.*

⁴ Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum.—*Prov. ix, 1.*

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God will help it in the morning early."¹ David says, that our Lord sanctified this His dwelling "in the morning early;" that is to say, from the beginning of her life, to render her worthy of Himself; for it was not becoming that a Holy God should choose Himself a dwelling that was not holy: "Holiness becometh thy house."² And if God declares that He will never enter a malicious soul, or dwell in a body subject to sin, "for wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins,"³ how can we ever think that the Son of God chose to dwell in the soul and body of Mary, without having previously sanctified and preserved it from every stain of sin? for, according to the doctrine of Saint Thomas, "the Eternal Word dwelt not only in the soul of Mary, but even in her womb."⁴ The holy Church sings, "Thou, O Lord, hast not disdained to dwell in the Virgin's womb."⁵ Yes, for He would have disdained to have taken flesh in the womb of an Agnes, a Gertrude, a Teresa, because these virgins, though holy, were nevertheless for a time stained with original sin; but He did not disdain to become man in the womb of Mary, because this beloved Virgin was always pure and free from the least shadow of sin, and was never possessed by the infernal serpent. And, therefore, Saint Augustine says, "that the Son of God never made Him-

¹ Sanctificavit tabernaculum suum Altissimus . . . adjuvabit eam Deus mane diluculo.—*Ps.* xlv, 5, 6.

² Domum tuam decet sanctitudo.—*Ps.* xcii, 5.

³ In malevolam animam non introibit sapientia, nec habitabit in corpore subdito peccatis.—*Sap.* i, 4.

⁴ Singulari modo Dei Filius, qui est Dei sapientia, in ipsa habitavit; non solum in anima, sed etiam in utero.—3 p. q. xxvii, art. 4, concl.

⁵ Non horruisti Virginis uterum.

self a more worthy dwelling than Mary, who was never possessed by the enemy, or despoiled of her ornaments."¹

On the other hand, Saint Cyril of Alexandria asks, "Who ever heard of an architect who built himself a temple, and yielded up the first possession of it to his greatest enemy?"²

Yes, says Saint Methodius, speaking on the same subject, that Lord who commanded us to honor our parents, would not do otherwise, when he became man, than observe it, by giving His Mother every grace, and honor:—"He who said, Honor thy father and thy mother, that He might observe His own decree, gave all grace and honor to His Mother."³ Therefore the author of the book already quoted, from the works of Saint Augustine, says, "that we must certainly believe that Jesus Christ preserved the body of Mary from corruption after death; for if He had not done so, he would not have observed the law," which "at the same time that it commands us to honor our mother it forbids us to show her disrespect."⁴ But how little would Jesus have guarded His Mother's honor had He not preserved her from Adam's sin? "Certainly, that

¹ Nullam digniorem domum sibi Filius Dei ædificavit quam Mariam, quæ nunquam fuit ab hostibus capta, neque suis ornamentis spoliata. †

² Quis unquam de architecto audivit, qui suum ipsius templum construxerit, et in eo habitare prohibitus sit?—*Hom. vi.*

³ Qui dixit, "Honora patrem tuum et matrem," longe potius id ipse præstare volens, gratiam servaverit ac quod ita statuit, ei, quæ ministravit ut sic sponte nasceretur, Divinisque laudibus decoraverit, quam sine patre, velut innuptam sibi matrem ascivit.—*Serm. de Symeone et Anna.*

⁴ Lex enim, sicut honorem matris præcipit, ita inhonorationem damnat.—*Lib. de Assump. B. V. int. op. S. Augustini.*

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son would sin," says the Augustinian father Thomas of Strasburg, "who, having it in his power to preserve his mother from original sin, did not do so;" "but that which would be a sin in us," continues the same author, "must certainly be considered unbecoming in the Son of God, who, whilst He could make His Mother immaculate, did it not." "Ah, no!" exclaims Gerson, "since thou, the supreme Prince, choosest to have a Mother, certainly Thou owest her honor. But now if Thou didst permit her, who was to be the dwelling of all purity, to be in the abomination of original sin, certainly it would appear that the law was not well fulfilled."¹

"Moreover, we know," says Saint Bernardine of Sienna, "that the Divine Son came into the world more to redeem Mary than all other creatures."² There are two means by which a person may be redeemed, as Saint Augustine teaches us—the one by raising him up after having fallen, and the other by preventing him from falling;³ and this last means is doubtless the most honorable. "He is more honorably redeemed," says the learned Suarez, "who is prevented from falling, than he who after falling is raised up;"⁴ for thus the injury or stain is avoided which the

¹ Cum tu summus Princeps, vis habere Matrem carnaliter in terra, illi debebis honorem, &c. Nunc autem appareret illam legem non bene adimpleri, si in hujusmodi abominatione, immunditia, et subjectione peccati, aliquo tempore permitteres illam, quæ esse debet habitaculum, templum, et palatium totius puritatis.—*Serm. de Concep. B. M. V.*

² Christus plus pro ipsa redimenda venit, quam pro omni alia creatura.—*Serm. de Concep. B. M. V. art. iii, cap. 3.*

³ *Enarratio in Ps. lxxxv, versic. 3.*

⁴ Duplex est redimendi modus, unus erigendo lapsum, alter præveniando jamjam lapsurum, ne cadat, juxta illud Psalm. 143:

soul always contracts by falling. This being the case, we ought certainly to believe that Mary was redeemed in the more honorable way, and the one which became the Mother of God, as Saint Bonaventure remarks; "for it is to be believed that the Holy Ghost, as a very special favor, redeemed and preserved her from original sin by a new kind of sanctification, and this in the very moment of her conception; not that sin was in her, but that it otherwise would have been."¹ The sermon, from which this passage is taken, is proved by Frassen² to be really the work of the holy Doctor above named. On the same subject Cardinal Cusano elegantly remarks, that "others had Jesus as a liberator, but to the most Blessed Virgin He was a pre-liberator;"³ meaning, that all others had a Redeemer who delivered them from sin with which they were already defiled, but that the most Blessed Virgin had a Redeemer

"Redemisti servum tuum de gladio maligno;" id est, custodisti, ne interficeretur. Ex his autem posterior modus est, sine dubio opus majoris gratiæ, et benevolentiæ, et cæteris paribus, majoris efficacæ, ac potestatis; ergo decuit, ut Christus Matrem suam nobilissimo modo redimeret.—*De Incarnat.* p. 2, q. xxvii, art. 2, disp. 3, sect. 5.

¹ Credendum est enim, quod novo sanctificationis genere, in ejus conceptionis primordio, Spiritus Sanctus eam a peccato originali (non quod inuit, sed quod inuisset) redemit, atque singulari gratia præservavit.—*Serm.* ii, de B. V. M.

² *Scot. Acad.* tom. viii, a. 3, sec. 3, q. i, No. 5. †

³ Præliberatore enim Virgo Sancta habuit, cæteri liberatorem et post-liberatorem. Christus enim sic omnium liberator, quod et Virginis liberator et præ-liberator, cæterorum vero liberator et post-liberator. Ipsa sola post Adæ lapsum, non indiga, sed plena originali justitia, ut Eva, et multo magis, creata fuit.—*Excitat.* lib. viii, *Serm. Sicut lil. int. sp.*

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who, because He was her Son, preserved her from ever being defiled by it.

In fine, to conclude this point in the words of Hugo of Saint Victor, the tree is known by its fruits. If the Lamb was always immaculate, the Mother must also have been always immaculate: "Such the Lamb, such the Mother of the Lamb; for the tree is known by its fruits."¹ Hence this same Doctor salutes Mary, saying, "O worthy Mother of a worthy Son;" meaning, that no other than Mary was worthy to be the Mother of such a Son, and no other than Jesus was a worthy Son of such a Mother: and then he adds these words: "O fair Mother of beauty itself, O high Mother of the most High, O Mother of God."² Let us then address this most Blessed Mother in the words of Saint Ildephonsus, "Suckle, O Mary, thy Creator, give milk to Him who made thee, and who made thee such that He could be made of thee."³

Third point.—Since then it was becoming that the Father should preserve Mary from sin as His daughter, and the Son as His Mother, it was also becoming that the Holy Ghost should preserve her as His spouse. Saint Augustine says that "Mary was that only one who merited to be called the Mother and Spouse of God."⁴ For

¹ Talis . . . Agnus, qualis Mater Agni . . . Quoniam omnis arbor ex fructu suo cognoscitur.—*De Verbo Inc. Coll.* iii.

² O digna digni, formosa pulchri, munda incorrupti, excelsa altissimi, Mater Dei, Sponsa Regis æterni.—*Serm.* iii, *de Assump.* B. M. V.

³ Lacta Maria, Creatorem tuum, lacta panem cœli, lacta præmium mundi . . . Lacta ergo eum qui fecit te, qui talem fecit te ut ipse fieret ex te.—*Serm.* *de Nat.* B. M. V.

⁴ Hæc est quæ sola meruit Mater et Sponsa vocari.—*Serm.* *de Assumpt.* B. M. V. †

Saint Anselm asserts that "the Divine Spirit, the love itself of the Father and the Son, came corporally into Mary, and enriching her with graces above all creatures, reposed in her and made her His Spouse, the Queen of heaven and earth."¹ He says that he came into her corporally; that is, as to the effect: for He came to form of her immaculate body the immaculate body of Jesus Christ, as the Archangel had already predicted to her: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee."² And therefore it is, says Saint Thomas, "that Mary is called the temple of the Lord and the sacred resting-place of the Holy Ghost; for by the operation of the Holy Ghost she became the Mother of the Incarnate Word."³

And now had an excellent artist the power to make his bride such as he could represent her, what pains would he not take to render her as beautiful as possible? Who then can say that the Holy Ghost did otherwise with Mary, when He could make her who was to be His spouse, as beautiful as it became Him that she should be?

Ah no! He acted as it became him to act; for this same Lord Himself declares: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee."⁴ These words, say Saint Ildephonsus and Saint Thomas, are properly to be understood of Mary, as Cornelius à Lapide remarks; and

¹ Ipse . . . Spiritus Dei, ipse amor Omnipotentis Patris et Filii . . . ipse inquam, corporaliter, ut bene dicam, venit in eam, singulæque gratia præ omnibus quæ creata sunt, sive in cælo, sive in terra, requievit in ea, et reginam ac imperatricem cæli et terræ, et omnium quæ in eis sunt, fecit eam.—*De Excel. Virg.* cap. iv.

² Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te.—*Luc.* i, 35.

³ Unde dicitur templum Domini, sacrarium Spiritus Sancti, quia concepit ex Spiritu Sancto.—*Opusc.* viii.

⁴ Tota pulchra es amica mea, et macula non est in te.—*Cant.* iv, 7.

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Saint Bernardine of Sienna,¹ and Saint Lawrence Justinian,² assert that they are to be understood precisely as applying to her Immaculate Conception; whence Blessed Raymond Jordano addresses her, saying, "Thou art all fair, O most glorious Virgin, not in part, but wholly; and no stain of mortal, venial, or original sin, is in thee."³

The Holy Ghost signified the same thing when He called this His spouse an inclosed garden and a sealed fountain: "My sister, my spouse, is a garden inclosed, a fountain sealed up."⁴ "Mary," says Saint Sophronius, "was this inclosed garden and sealed fountain, into which no guile could enter, against which no fraud of the enemy could prevail, and who always was holy in mind and body."⁵ Saint Bernard likewise says, addressing the Blessed Virgin, "Thou art an inclosed garden, into which the sinner's hand has never entered to pluck its flowers."⁶

We know that this Divine Spouse loved Mary more than all the other Saints and Angels put together, as Father Suarez, with Saint Lawrence Justinian, and others assert, He loved her from the very beginning and exalted

¹ *Serm. de Concep. B. M. V.* art. ii, c. 2.

² *Serm. de Nat. B. M. V.*

³ Tota . . . pulchra es Virgo gloriosissima, non in parte, sed in toto: et macula peccati, sive mortalis, sive venialis, sive originalis, non est in te.—*Contempl. B. V.* cap. ii.

⁴ Hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus.—*Cant.* iv. 12.

⁵ Hæc est hortus conclusus, fons signatus, puteus aquarum viventium, ad quam nulli potuerunt doli irrumpere: nec prævaluit fraus inimici, sed permansit sancta, mente et corpore.—*Serm. de Assump. B. M. V. int. op. S. Hieron.*

⁶ Hortus conclusus tu es Dei genitrix, ad quem deflorandum manus peccatoris nunquam introivit.—*Depr. ad. B. V. M.*

her in sanctity above all others, as it is expressed by David in the Psalms: "The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains: the Lord loveth the gates of Sion above all the tabernacles of Jacob . . . a man is born in her, and the Highest Himself hath founded her."¹ Words which all signify that Mary was holy from her conception. The same thing is signified by other passages addressed to her by the Holy Ghost. In Proverbs we read, "Many daughters have gathered together riches: thou hast surpassed them all."² If Mary has surpassed all others in the riches of grace, she must have had original justice, as Adam and the Angels had it. In the Canticles we read, "There are . . . young maidens without number. One is my dove, my perfect one (in the Hebrew it is my entire, my immaculate one), is but one, she is the only one of her Mother."³ All just souls are daughters of Divine grace; but amongst these Mary was the *dove* without the gall of sin, the *perfect* one without spot in her origin, the *one* conceived in grace.

Hence it is that the angel, before she became the Mother of God, already found her full of grace, and thus saluted her, "Hail, full of Grace;" on which words Saint Sophronius writes, that "grace is given partially to other Saints, but to the Blessed Virgin all was given."⁴ So

¹ Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis: Diligit Dominus portas Sion super omnia tabernacula Jacob . . . Homo natus est in ea: et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus.—*Ps.* lxxxvi, 1, 5.

² Multæ filiæ congregaverunt divitias: tu supergressa es universas.—*Prov.* xxxi, 29.

³ Adolescentularum non est numerus. Una est columba mea, perfecta mea, una est matris suæ.—*Cant.* vi, 7, 8.

⁴ Gratia plena: et bene plena, quia cæteris per partes præsta-

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much so, says Saint Thomas, that "grace not only rendered the soul, but even the flesh of Mary holy, so that this Blessed Virgin might be able to clothe the Eternal Word with it."¹ Now all this leads us to the conclusion that Mary, from the moment of her conception, was enriched and filled with Divine grace by the Holy Ghost, as Peter of Celles remarks, "the plenitude of grace was in her; for from the very moment of her conception the whole grace of the Divinity overflowed upon her, by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost."² Hence Saint Peter Damian says, "that the Holy Spirit was about to bear her off entirely to Himself, who was chosen and pre-elected by God."³ The Saint says, to bear her off, to denote the holy velocity of the Divine Spirit, in being beforehand, in making this Spouse His own, before Lucifer should take possession of her.

Finally, I wish to conclude this discourse, which I have prolonged beyond the limits of the others, because our Congregation has this Blessed Virgin Mary, precisely under the title of her Immaculate Conception, for its principal patroness: I say that I wish to conclude by giving, in as few words as possible, the reasons which make me feel certain, and which, in my opinion, ought to

tur: Mariæ vero simul se tota infudit plenitudo gratiæ.—*Serm. de Assump. B. M. V. int. op. S. Hieron.*

¹ Anima B. Virginis ita fuit plena, quod ex ea refundit gratia in carnem, ut de ipsa conciperet Deum.—*Opusc. viii.*

² Simul collecta gratiæ plenitudo, nullatenus creaturæ humanæ capacitæ potest apprehendi . . . privilegio . . . Filii sui, supra totius creaturæ meritum Mater Dei aspersione Spiritus Sancti, tota Deitatis gratia est perfusa.—*Lib. de Panib. cap. xii.*

³ A Deo electam et præelectam, totam eam rapturus erat sibi Spiritus Sanctus.—*Serm. de Annunt. B. M. V.*

convince every one of the truth of so pious a belief, and which is so glorious for the Divine Mother: that is, that she was free from original sin.

There are many Doctors who maintain that Mary was exempted from contracting even the debt of sin; for instance, Cardinal Galatino,¹ Cardinal Cusano,² De Ponte,³ Salazar,⁴ Catharinus,⁵ Novarino,⁶ Viva, De Lugo,⁷ Egidio, Richelio, and others. And this opinion is also probable; for if it is true that the wills of all men were included in that of Adam, as being the head of all, and this opinion is maintained as probable by Gonet,⁸ Habert,⁹ and others, founded on the doctrine of Saint Paul, contained in the fifth chapter to the Romans,—if this opinion, I say, is probable, it is also probable that Mary did not contract the debt of sin; for, whilst God distinguished her from the common of men by so many graces, it ought to be piously believed that He did not include her will in that of Adam.

This opinion is only probable, and I adhere to it as being more glorious for my sovereign Lady. But I consider the opinion, that Mary did not contract the sin of Adam, as certain; and it is considered so, and even as proximately definable, as an article of faith (as they ex-

¹ *De Arca*, lib. vii, c. 18. †

² Lib. viii, *Excit. ex Serm. Sicut. lib. int. sp.*

³ Lib. ii, *Cant. ex.* 10. †

⁴ *De Virg. Conc. c.* vii, n. 7. †

⁵ *De Pecc. orig. c.* ult. †

⁶ *Umb. Virg. Excursus*, xviii.

⁷ P. viii, disp. i, q. 2, art. 2.

⁸ *Man. to.* iii, tr. 5, c. 6, No. 2. †

⁹ *Tom. iii de Pec. c.* 7. †

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press it), by Cardinal Everard,¹ Duval,² Raynauld,³ Lossada,⁴ Viva,⁵ and many others. I omit, however, the revelations which confirm this belief, particularly those of Saint Bridget, which were approved of by Cardinal Torquemada,⁶ and by four sovereign Pontiffs, and which are found in various parts of the sixth book of her Revelations.⁷ But on no account can I omit the opinions of the holy Fathers on this subject, whereby to show their unanimity in conceding this privilege to the Divine Mother. Saint Ambrose says, "Receive me not from Sarah, but from Mary, that it may be an uncorrupted Virgin, a Virgin free by grace from every stain of sin."⁸ Origen, speaking of Mary, asserts that "she was not infected by the venomous breath of the serpent."⁹ Saint Ephrem, that "she was immaculate, and remote from all stain of sin."¹⁰ An ancient writer (Saint Fulgentius?), in a sermon, found amongst the works of Saint Augustine, on the words "Hail, full of grace," says, "By these words the angel shows that she was altogether [remark the word altogether] excluded from the wrath of the first sentence, and restored to the full grace of blessing."¹¹ The author

¹ Per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit . . . in quo (Ada) omnes peccaverunt.—*Rom. v. 12.*

² *In Exam. Theol.* †

³ 1, 2, *Qu. 2 de Pecc.* †

⁴ *Piet. Lugd.* No. 29. †

⁵ *Disc. Th. de Imm. Conc.* †

⁶ *Qu. Prod. ad Trut.* †

⁷ *Lib. vi, cap. 12, 49, 55.*

⁸ Suscipe me non ex Sara, sed ex Maria; ut incorrupta sit Virgo, sed Virgo per gratiam ab omni integra labe peccati.—*Serm. xxii in Ps. cxviii, No. 30.*

⁹ Nec serpentis venenosis afflatibus infecta est.—*Hom. i.* †

¹⁰ Immaculata et intemerata, incorrupta et prorsus pudica, atque ab omni sorde ac labe peccati alienissima.—*Ad S. Dei Gen. Orat.*

¹¹ Cum dixit "gratia plena," ostendit ex integro, iram exclusam

of an old work, called the Breviary of Saint Jerome, affirms that "that cloud was never in darkness, but always in light."¹ Saint Cyprian, or whoever may be the author of the work on the 77th Psalm, says, "Nor did justice endure that that vessel of election should be open to common injuries; for being far exalted above others, she partook of their nature, not of their sin."² Saint Amphilochius, that "He who formed the first Virgin without deformity, also made the second one without spot or sin."³ Saint Sophronius, that "the Virgin is therefore called immaculate, for in nothing was she corrupt."⁴ Saint Ildephonsus argues, that "it is evident that she was free from original sin."⁵ Saint John Damascene says that "the serpent never had any access to this paradise."⁶

primæ sententiæ, et plenam benedictionis gratiam restitutam.—*Int. op. S. Augustini, Serm. vii, de Nat. Dom.*

¹ Nubem levem debemus sanctam Mariam accipere . . . Et duxit eos in nube diei. Pulchre dixit, diei: Nubes enim illa non fuit in tenebris, sed semper in luce.—*Brev. S. Hieron. in Ps. lxxvii.*

² Nec sustinebat justitia, ut illud vas electionis communibus lassaretur injuriis; quoniam plurimum a cæteris differens, natura communicabat, non culpa.—*Léb. de Card. Op. Christi, de Nativ.*

³ Qui antiquam illam virginem sine probro condidit; Ipse, et secundam, sine nota et crimine fabricatus est.—*Orat. in S. Deip. et Simeon.*

⁴ Virgo sancta accipitur, et anima corpusque sanctificatur; atque ita ministravit in incarnatione Creatoris, ut munda et casta, atque incontaminata . . . Ex inviolabili namque et virginali sanguine atque immaculatæ Virginis Mariæ Verbum vere factum est incarnatum.—*Harduin. tom. iii, Conc. Œcumen. 6, act. 11.*

⁵ Constat, eam ab omni originali peccato immunem fuisse.—*Cont. disp. de Virginit. B. V. M.*

⁶ In hunc paradisum serpenti aditum non patuit.—*Or. ii, de Nat. B. M. V.*

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Saint Peter Damian, that "the flesh of the Virgin, taken from Adam, did not admit of the stain of Adam."¹ Saint Bruno affirms, "that Mary is that uncorrupted earth which God blessed, and was therefore free from all contagion of sin."² Saint Bonaventure, "that our Sovereign Lady was full of preventing grace for her sanctification; that is, preservative grace against the corruption of original sin."³ Saint Bernardine of Sienna argues, that "it is not to be believed that He, the Son of God, would be born of a Virgin, and take her flesh, were she in the slightest degree stained with original sin."⁴ Saint Lawrence Justinian affirms, "that she was prevented in blessings, from her very conception."⁵ And the blessed Raymond Jordano, on the words "Thou hast found grace," says, "thou hast found a singular grace, O most sweet Virgin, that of preservation from original sin, &c."⁶ And many other Doctors speak in the same sense.

But finally, there are two arguments that conclusively prove the truth of this pious belief. The first of these is

¹ Caro . . . Virginis ex Adam assumpta, maculas Adæ non admisit.—*Serm. de Assump. B. M. V.*

² Hæc est . . . incorrupta terra illa, cui benedixit Dominus, ab omni propterea peccati contagione libera, per quam vitæ viam agnovimus, et promissam veritatem acceperimus.—*In Ps. ci.*

³ Domina nostra fuit plena gratia præveniente in sua sanctificatione, gratia scilicet præservativa contra fœditatem originalis culpæ.—*Serm. ii, de B. M. V.*

⁴ Non est credendum, quod ipse Filius Dei voluerit nasci ex virgine, et sumere ejus carnem, quæ esset maculata ex aliquo peccato originali.—*Serm. in Feria iii, post Pascha.*

⁵ Ab ipsa namque sui conceptione, in benedictionibus est præventa.—*Serm. in Annunc. B. M. V.*

⁶ Invenisti Virgo Maria, gratiam cælestem; quia fuerunt in te ab originis labe præservatio, &c.—*Contempl. de B. V. M. cap. vi.*

the universal concurrence of the faithful. Father Egidius, of the Presentation,¹ assures us that all the religious orders follow this opinion; and a modern author tells us that though there are ninety-two writers of the order of Saint Dominic against it, nevertheless there are a hundred and thirty-six in favor of it, even in that religious body. But that which above all should persuade us that our pious belief is in accordance with the general sentiment of Catholics is, that we are assured of it, in the celebrated bull of Alexander VII, "*Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*," published in 1661, in which he says, "This devotion and homage towards the Mother of God was again increased and propagated . . . so that the universities having adopted this opinion (that is the pious one), already nearly all Catholics have embraced it."² And in fact this opinion is defended in the universities of the Sorbonne, Alcalá, Salamanca, Coimbra, Cologne, Mentz, Naples, and many others, in which all who take their degrees are obliged to swear that they will defend the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception. The learned Petavius mainly rests his proofs of the truth of this doctrine on the argument taken from the general sentiment of the faithful.³ An argument, writes the most learned bishop Julius Torni,⁴ which cannot do otherwise than convince; for in fact, if nothing else does, the general consent of the faithful

¹ *De Præs. V. q. vi, a. 4. †*

² *Aucta rursus et propagata fuit pietas hæc et cultus erga Deiparam . . . ita ut accedentibus quoque plerisque celebrioribus Academiis ad hanc sententiam, jam fere omnes Catholici eam amplectantur.*

³ *Tom. v, lib. 14, cap. 2, No. 10.*

⁴ *In Adm. ad Æst. l. ii, dist. 3, No. 2. †*

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makes us certain of the sanctification of Mary in her mother's womb, and of her Assumption, in body and soul, into heaven. Why then should not the same general feeling and belief, on the part of the faithful, also make us certain of her Immaculate Conception?

The second reason, and which is stronger than the first, that convinces us that Mary was exempt from original sin, is the celebration of her Immaculate Conception commanded by the universal Church. And on this subject I see, on the one hand, that the Church celebrates the first moment in which her soul was created and infused into her body, for this was declared by Alexander VII, in the above-named bull, in which he says, that the Church gives the same worship to Mary in her Conception, which is given to her by those who hold the pious belief that she was conceived without original sin. On the other hand, I hold it as certain, that the Church cannot celebrate anything which is not holy, according to the doctrine of the holy Pope Saint Leo,¹ and that of the Sovereign Pontiff Saint Eusebius: "In the Apostolic See the Catholic religion was always preserved spotless."² All theologians, with Saint Augustine,³ Saint Bernard,⁴ and Saint Thomas, agree on this point, and the latter, to prove that Mary was sanctified before her birth, makes use of this very argument: "The Church celebrates the nativity of the Blessed Virgin; but a feast is celebrated only for a Saint: therefore the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in

¹ *Ep. Decret.* iv, c. 2. †

² In Sede Apostolica extra maculam semper est Catholica servata religio.—*Decr.* xxiv, No. 1, c. *in sede.* †

³ *Serm.* clv et cxlii. †

⁴ *Ep. ad Can. Iudg.*

her mother's womb."¹ But if it is certain, as the angelic Doctor says, that Mary was sanctified in her mother's womb, because it is only on that supposition that the Church can celebrate her Nativity, why are we not to consider it as equally certain that Mary was preserved from original sin from the first moment of her Conception, knowing as we do, that it is in this sense that the Church herself celebrates the feast?

PRAYER.

Ah, my Immaculate Lady! I rejoice with thee on seeing thee enriched with so great purity. I thank, and resolve always to thank, our common Creator for having preserved thee from every stain of sin, and I firmly believe this doctrine, and am prepared, and swear even to lay down my life, should this be necessary, in defence of this thy so great and singular privilege of being conceived immaculate. I would that the whole world knew thee and acknowledged thee as being that beautiful "Dawn" which was always illumined with Divine light; for that chosen "Ark" of salvation, free from the common shipwreck of sin; for that "perfect and immaculate Dove" which thy Divine Spouse declared thee to be; for that "inclosed Garden" which was the delight of God; for that "sealed Fountain" whose waters were never troubled by an enemy; and, finally, for that "white Lily," which thou art, and who, though born in the midst of the thorns of the children of Adam, all of

¹ *Ecclesia celebrat nativitatem Beatæ Virginis: non autem celebratur festum in Ecclesia nisi pro aliquo sancto. Ergo Beata Virgo in ipsa sua nativitate fuit sancta. Fuit ergo in utero sanctificata.*—3 p. Q. xxvii, art. 1.

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whom are conceived in sin, and the enemies of God, wast alone conceived pure and spotless, and in all things the beloved of thy Creator.

Permit me then to praise thee also as thy God Himself has praised thee: "Thou art all fair, and there is not a spot in thee." O most pure Dove, all fair, all beautiful, always the friend of God! "O how beautiful art thou, my beloved! how beautiful art thou!" Ah! most sweet, most amiable, immaculate Mary, thou who art so beautiful in the eyes of thy Lord,—ah! disdain not to cast thy compassionate eyes on the wounds of my soul, loathsome as they are. Behold me, pity me, heal me. O beautiful loadstone of hearts, draw also my miserable heart to thyself. O thou, who from the first moment of thy life didst appear pure and beautiful before God, pity me, who not only was born in sin, but have again since baptism stained my soul with crimes. What grace will God ever refuse thee who chose thee for his Daughter, His Mother and Spouse, and therefore preserved thee from every stain, and in His love preferred thee to all other creatures? I will say in the words of Saint Philip Neri: "Immaculate Virgin, thou hast to save me." Grant that I may always remember thee; and thou, do thou never forget me. The happy day, when I shall go to behold thy beauty in paradise, seems a thousand years off. So much do I long to praise and love thee more than I can now do, my Mother, my Queen, my beloved, most beautiful, most sweet, most pure, Immaculate Mary. Amen.



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Holy
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Mother
for

Mother
pray

LITANY OF THE HOLY VIRGIN,

WITH

SENTENCES FROM THE FATHERS.

LITANY.

Holy Mary, pray for
us.

Holy Mother of God,
pray for us.

Holy Virgin of virgins,
pray for us.

Mother of Christ, pray
for us.

Mother of Divine grace,
pray for us,

SENTENCES.

Mary was so holy, that the Holy Spirit deigned to come to her.—*S. Augustin.*

All dignity and perfection are comprehended, O Mary, in that which it is to be Mother of God.—*S. Bernard.*

God would have Mary a virgin, that out of one immaculate, the Immaculate should be brought forth to purge the stain of all.—*S. Bernard.*

Christ coming down into a virgin, by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, took flesh.—*S. Cyprian.*

God made Mary His mother, that she should be the mother of all.—*S. Anselm.*

Mary, thou art full of grace, which thou didst find from the

Lord, and which thou hast merited to diffuse through the world.—*S. Augustin.*

Mother most pure,
pray for us.

O blessed above women, who vanquishest the angels by purity.—*S. Anselm.*

What even of angelical purity shall dare to be compared with the purity of Mary, who was worthy to become the habitation of the Son of God?—*S. Bernard.*

Mother most chaste,
pray for us.

Christ chose a virgin mother, that she might be to all a model of chastity.—*S. Sophronius.*

Mother inviolate, pray
for us.

Mary, the immaculate mother of the holy and immaculate.—*Origen.*

Mother untouched,
pray for us.

There is one thing in which Mary had no precedent, nor can have a follower: the joy of being a mother, with the honor of being a virgin.—*S. Bernard.*

Holy Mary, blessed Mary, mother and virgin.—*S. Chrysostom.*

Mother most amiable,
pray for us.

There was nothing austere in Mary, nothing terrible, all was gentleness.—*S. Bernard.*

Mary, amiable to contemplate.—*S. Anselm.*

Mary, amiable in all things.—*S. Bernard.*

Mother most wonder-
ful, pray for us.

God showed his wonders in his mother.—*S. Bernard.*

It is thy praise, O wonderful mother, that we are not able to celebrate thy praises by suitable encomiums.—*S. Germ. Constant.*

Mother of the Saviour,
pray for us.

Mary, mother of the Saviour,
the spouse of God.—*S. Anselm.*

Most prudent Virgin,
pray for us.

Mary was humble of heart,
grave of speech, of a prudent
mind.—*S. Anselm.*

Mary, most prudent Virgin.—
S. Thomas à Kempis.

Venerable Virgin,
pray for us.

Mary, venerated by an angel.
—*S. Ildefonse.*

Mary, after her Son, most
worthy of veneration.—*S. Ber-
nard.*

Renowned Virgin,
pray for us.

What shall I, poor of genius,
say of thee, O blessed Virgin,
while all that I say is less praise
than thy dignity deserves?—*S.
Augustin.*

Mary is great in all times, all
conditions, among tribes, and peo-
ple, and languages.—*S. Anselm.*

Powerful Virgin, pray
for us.

As to Mary, when she is heard
of her Son, it is to be answered.
—*S. Bernard.*

Clement Virgin, pray
for us.

Mary, clement to the penitent.
—*S. Bernard.*

Mary is more clement and
gentle than any mother.—*S.
Gregory.*

Faithful Virgin, pray
for us.

Eve had believed the serpent, Mary believed Gabriel. The fault that the former committed by believing, the latter effaced by faith.—*Tertullian*.

The faith of Mary opened heaven.—*S. Augustin*.

Mirror of Justice, pray
for us.

Mary is the mirror and pattern of all justice.—*S. Ambrose*.

Seat of Wisdom, pray
for us.

The Celestial Wisdom built in Mary a home for Himself.—*S. Bernard*.

Mary, the home (or dwelling) of Eternal Wisdom.—*S. Jerome*.

Cause of our joy, pray
for us.

By Mary, universal joy came forth into the world.—*S. Germanius*.

Spiritual Vessel, pray
for us.

Mary being about to give a body to the new-born God, becomes first, in spirit, the temple of God.—*S. Hilary of Arles*.

Honorable Vessel,
pray for us.

Mary, beautiful and elect vessel of God.—*S. Ephrem*.

Singular Vessel of devotion,
pray for us.

Sacred depository of the Holy Spirit.—*S. Isidore of Seville*.

Mystical Rose, pray
for us.

Mary, the rose coming forth from the thorns of Judah, shedding over all a divine fragrance.—*S. John Damascene*.

Tower of Ivory, pray
for us.

Mary, the house which the Eternal Wisdom built for Himself.—*S. Bonaventure*.

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Gate
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Star
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Health
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Refuge
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Help
pray

- Mary, the beautiful temple of the Divine Humility.—*S. Andrew of Crete.*
- House of Gold, pray for us. Mary, truly the ark, gilded within and without with gold, which received the whole treasure of sanctification.—*S. Gregory Thaumaturge.*
- Ark of the Covenant, pray for us. Mary, the ark of sanctification, which contained the celestial manna.—*S. Ambrose.*
- Gate of Heaven, pray for us. Mary, the gate of heaven.—*S. Ephrem.*
- Star of the Morning, pray for us. Mary, the door of heaven.—*S. Thomas à Kempis.*
- Health of the weak, pray for us. Mary, the sun that knows no setting, the star ever clear and sparkling.—*S. Bernard.*
- Refuge of Sinners, pray for us. Mary, the star by whose guidance we sail to our country.—*S. Germanius.*
- Comforter of the afflicted, pray for us. By Mary God opened to us a place of public healing.—*S. Basil.*
- Help of Christians, pray for us. Mary, health of the weak.—*S. Thomas à Kempis.*
- Mary, the refuge and asylum of sinners.—*S. Ephrem.*
- Mary, who turns grief into sweet solace.—*S. Jno. Damascene.*
- Mary, fountain of consolation.—*S. Ephrem.*
- Mary's name is a signal of help.—*S. Ephrem.*

Queen of Angels, pray
for us.

Mary, queen of heaven and
earth.—*S. Anselm.*

Ascending from the desert, the
queen of angels.—*S. Bernard.*

Queen of Patriarchs,
pray for us.

In Mary was the patience of
Job, the meekness of Moses, the
faith of Abraham, the chastity of
Joseph, the humility of David,
the wisdom of Solomon, the zeal
of Elias.—*S. Thom. of Villanova.*

Queen of Prophets,
pray for us.

Queen of Apostles,
pray for us.

Mary, apostle of apostles, evan-
gelist of evangelists.—*S. Anselm.*

Queen of Martyrs,
pray for us.

If all the sufferings of the
world were collected together,
they would not equal the sorrows
of Mary.—*S. Bernard. of Sienna.*

Queen of Confessors,
pray for us.

In Mary the devotion of con-
fessors.—*S. Thomas of Villanova.*

Queen of Virgins, pray
for us.

The Virgin Christ and the Vir-
gin Mary dedicated the princi-
ples of virginity in both sexes.—
S. Jerome.

Queen of all Saints,
pray for us.

All rivers flow into the sea, so
the graces of all saints centre in
Mary.

Queen conceived with-
out Original Sin,
pray for us.

The river of graces of angels
centres in Mary, and the river of
graces of the patriarchs and pro-
phets centres in Mary. The river
of graces of the apostles and the
river of graces of the martyrs
centre in Mary. The river of
graces of confessors centres in

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Mary, and the river of graces of virgins centres in Mary.

What wonder, that all graces should flow into the sea, out of which flows so much grace.—*S. Bonaventure.*

EJACULATORY PRAYERS TO THE MOST B. VIRGIN MARY.

Mother of God, remember me.—*Saint Francis Xavier.*

O Virgin and Mother, grant that I may always remember thee.—*Saint Philip Neri.*

Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.—*The same Saint.*

O Lady, grant that Jesus may never cast me off.—*Saint Ephrem.*

O Mary, may my heart never cease to love thee, and my tongue never cease to praise thee.—*Saint Bonaventure.*

O Lady, by the love which thou bearest to Jesus, help me to love Him.—*Saint Bridget.*

O Mary, be graciously pleased to make me thy servant.—*Saint Jane de Chantal.*

O Mary, I give myself to thee without reserve, do thou accept and preserve me.—*Saint Mary Magdalen de Pazzi.*

O Mary, abandon me not until death.—*Father Spinelli.*

Hail Mary, my Mother.—*Father Francis Brancaccio.*

Holy Mary, my Advocate, pray for me.—*Father Sertorio Caputo.*

Mother most holy, how sweet to me
Is thy own most blessed name, Mary!
Which peace does impart,
And joy to my heart,
Let me call without ceasing on thee.

SANCTISSIMI DOMINI NOSTRI PII,
DIVINA PROVIDENTIA PAPÆ IX,
LITTERÆ APOSTOLICÆ

DE DOGMATICA DEFINITIONE IMMACULATÆ CONCEPTIONIS VIRGINIS DEIPARÆ.

PIUS, EPISCOPUS, SERVUS SERVORUM DEI.

AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM.

INEFFABILIS Deus, cujus viæ misericordia et veritas, cujus voluntas omnipotentia, et cujus sapientia attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter et disponit omnia suaviter, cum ab omni æternitate præviderit luctuosissimam totius humani generis ruinam ex Adami transgressionem derivandam, atque in mysterio a sæculis abscondito primum suæ bonitatis opus decreverit per Verbi incarnationem sacramento occultiore complere, ut contra misericors suum propositum homo diabolicæ iniquitatis versutia actus in culpam non periret, et quod in primo Adamo casurum erat, in secundo felicius erigeretur, ab initio et ante sæcula Unigenito Filio suo matrem, ex qua caro factus in beata temporum plenitudine nasceretur, elegit atque ordinavit, tantoque præ creaturis universis est prosequutus amore, ut in illa una sibi propensissima voluntate complacuerit. Quapropter illam longe ante omnes Angelicos Spiritus,

LETTERS APOSTOLIC
OF
OUR MOST HOLY LORD PIUS IX,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE POPE,

CONCERNING THE DOGMATIC DEFINITION OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD.

PIUS, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

FOR THE PERPETUAL REMEMBRANCE OF THE THING.

THE Ineffable God, whose ways are mercy and truth, whose will is omnipotence, and whose wisdom reaches powerfully from end to end, and disposes all things sweetly, when he foresaw from all eternity the most sorrowful ruin of the entire human race to follow from the transgression of Adam, and in a mystery hidden from ages determined to complete, through the incarnation of the Word, in a more hidden sacrament, the first work of His goodness, so that man, led into sin by the craft of diabolical iniquity, should not perish contrary to His merciful design, and that what was about to befall in the first Adam should be restored more happily in the second; from the beginning and before ages, chose and ordained a mother for His only-begotten Son, of whom, made flesh, He should be born in the blessed plenitude of time, and followed her with so great love before all creatures that in her alone He pleased Himself with a most benign complacency. Wherefore, far before all the angelic spirits

cunctosque Sanctos cœlestium omnium charismatum copia de thesauro divinitatis deprompta ita mirifice cumulavit, ut Ipsa ab omni prorsus peccati labe semper libera, ac tota pulchra et perfecta eam innocentiae et sanctitatis plenitudinem prae se ferret, qua major sub Deo nullatenus intelligitur, et quam praeter Deum nemo assequi cogitando potest. Et quidem decebat omnino, ut perfectissimae sanctitatis splendoribus semper ornata fulgeret, ac vel ab ipsa originalis culpae labe plane immunis amplissimum de antiquo serpente triumphum referret tam venerabilis mater, cui Deus Pater unicum Filium suum, quem de corde suo æqualem sibi genitum tamquam seipsum diligit, ita dare disposuit, ut naturaliter esset unus idemque communis Dei Patris, et Virginis Filius, et quam ipse Filius substantialiter facere sibi matrem elegit, et de qua Spiritus Sanctus voluit, et operatus est, ut conciperetur et nasceretur ille, de quo ipse procedit.

Quam originalem augustae Virginis innocentiam cum admirabili ejusdem sanctitate, præcelsaque Dei Matris dignitate omnino cohærentem catholica Ecclesia, quæ a Sancto semper edocta Spiritu columna est ac firmamentum veritatis, tamquam doctrinam possidens divinitus acceptam, et cœlestis revelationis deposito comprehensam multiplici continenter ratione, splendidisque factis magis in dies explicare, proponere, ac fovere numquam destitit. Hanc enim doctrinam ab antiquissimis temporibus vigentem, ac fidelium animis penitus insitam et Sacrorum Antistitum curis studiisque per catholicum orbem mirifice

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and all the Saints, He so wonderfully endowed her with the abundance of all heavenly gifts, drawn from the treasure of divinity, that she might be ever free from every stain of sin, and, all fair and perfect, should bear before her that plenitude of innocence and holiness than which, under God, none greater is understood, and which, except God, no one can reach, even in thought. And, indeed, it was most becoming that she should shine always adorned with the splendor of the most perfect holiness, and, free even from the stain of original sin, she should have the most complete triumph over the ancient serpent—that Mother so venerable, to whom God the Father willed to give his only Son, begotten of His heart, equal to Himself, and whom He loves as Himself; and to give Him in such a manner that he is by nature one and the same common Son of God the Father and of the Virgin, and whom the Son chose substantially to be His Mother, and of whom the Holy Ghost willed that, by His operation, He, from whom He Himself proceeds, should be conceived and born.

Which original innocence of the august Virgin agreeing completely with her admirable holiness, and with the most excellent dignity of the Mother of God, the Catholic Church, which, ever taught by the Holy Spirit, is the pillar and ground of truth, as possessing a doctrine divinely received, and comprehended in the deposit of heavenly revelation, has never ceased to lay down, to cherish, and to illustrate continually by numerous proofs, and daily more and more by conspicuous facts. For this doctrine, flourishing from the most ancient times, and implanted in the minds of the faithful, and by the care and zeal of the Holy Pontiffs wonderfully propagated, the



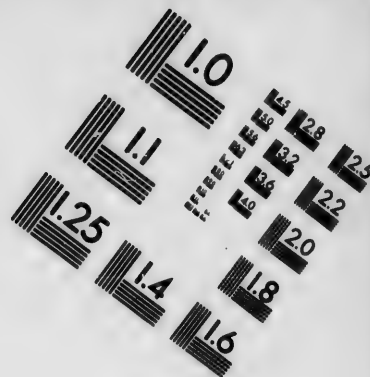
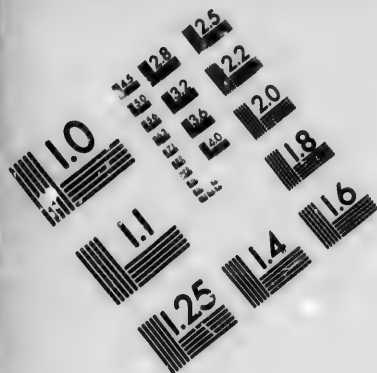
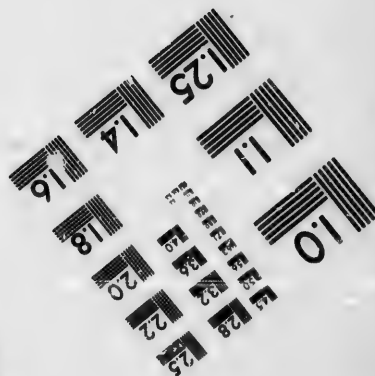
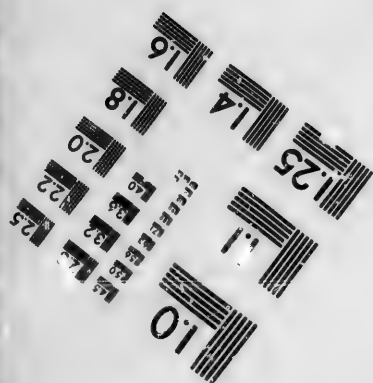
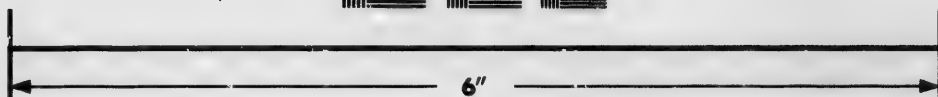
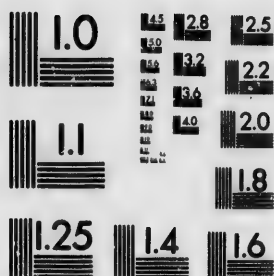


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propagatam ipsa Ecclesia luculentissime significavit, cum ejusdem Virginis Conceptionem publico fidelium cultui ac venerationi proponere non dubitavit. Quo illustri quidem facto ipsius Virginis Conceptionem veluti singularem, miram, et a reliquorum hominum primordiis longissime secretam, et omnino sanctam colendam exhibuit, cum Ecclesia nonnisi de Sanctis dies festos concelebrat. Atque idcirco vel ipsissima verba quibus divinæ Scripturæ de increata Sapientia loquuntur, ejusque sempiternas origines repræsentant, consuevit tum in ecclesiasticis officiis, tum in sacrosancta Liturgia adhibere, at ad illius Virginis primordia transferre, quæ uno eodemque decreto cum Divinæ Sapientiæ incarnatione fuerant præstituta.

Quamvis autem hæc omnia penes fideles ubique prope recepta ostendant, quo studio ejusmodi de Immaculata Virginis Conceptione doctrinam ipsa quoque Romana Ecclesia omnium Ecclesiarum mater et magistra fuerit prosequuta, tamen illustria hujus Ecclesiæ facta digna plane sunt quæ nominatim recenseantur, cum tanta sit ejusdem Ecclesiæ dignitas, atque auctoritas, quanta illi omnino debetur, quæ est catholicæ veritatis et unitatis centrum, in qua solum inviolabiliter fuit custodita religio, et ex qua traducem fidei reliquæ omnes Ecclesiæ mutuuntur oportet. Itaque eadem Romana Ecclesia nihil potius habuit, quam eloquentissimis quibusque modis Immaculatam Virginis Conceptionem, ejusque cultum et doctrinam asserere, tueri, promovere et vindicare. Quod apertissime planissimeque testantur et declarant tot insignia sane acta Roma-

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Church herself has most clearly pointed out when she did not hesitate to propose the conception of the same Virgin for the public devotion and veneration of the faithful. By which illustrious act she pointed out the conception of the Virgin as singular, wonderful, and very different from the origin of the rest of mankind, and to be venerated as entirely holy, since the Church celebrates by festivals only that which is holy. And, therefore, the very words in which the Sacred Scriptures speak of uncreated Wisdom and represent His eternal origin, she has been accustomed to use not only in the offices of the Church, but also in the holy liturgy, and to transfer to the origin of that Virgin, which was preordained by one and the same decree with the incarnation of Divine Wisdom.

But though all those things everywhere justly received amongst the faithful show with what zeal the Roman Church, the mother and mistress of all Churches, has supported the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, yet the illustrious acts of this Church are evidently worthy that they should be reviewed in detail; since so great is the dignity and authority of the same Church, so much is due to her who is the centre of Catholic truth and unity, in whom alone religion has been inviolably guarded, and from whom it is right that all the Churches should receive the tradition of faith. Thus the same Roman Church had nothing more at heart than to assert, to protect, to promote, and to vindicate in the most eloquent manner the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, its devotion and doctrine, which fact is attested and proclaimed by so many illustrious acts of the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, to whom, in the person of the Prince of the Apostles, was divinely committed by Christ

norum Pontificum Decessorum Nostrorum, quibus in persona Apostolorum Principis ab ipso Christo Domino divinitus fuit commissa suprema cura atque potestas pascendi agnos et oves, confirmandi fratres, et universam regendi et gubernandi Ecclesiam.

Enimvero Prædecessores Nostri vehementur gloriati sunt Apostolica sua auctoritate festum Conceptionis in Romana Ecclesia instituere, ac proprio Officio, propriaque Missa, quibus prærogativa immunitatis ab hereditaria labe manifestissime asserebatur, augere, honestare, et cultum jam institutum omni ope promovere, amplificare sive erogatis indulgentiis, sive facultate tributa civitatibus, provinciis, regnisque, ut Deiparam sub titulo Immaculatæ Conceptionis patronam sibi deligerent, sive comprobatis Sodalitatibus, Congregationibus, Religiosisque Familiis ad Immaculatæ Conceptionis honorem institutis; sive laudibus eorum pietati delatis, qui monasteria, xenodochia, altaria, templa sub Immaculati Conceptus titulo erexerint, aut sacramenti religione interposita Immaculatam Deiparæ Conceptionem strenue propugnare sponderint. Insuper summopere lætati sunt decernere Conceptionis festum ab omni Ecclesia esse habendum eodem sensu ac numero, quo festum Nativitatis, idemque Conceptionis festum cum octava ab universa Ecclesia celebrandum, et ab omnibus inter ea, quæ præcepta sunt, sancte colendum ac Pontificiam Capellam in Patriarchali Nostra Liberiana Basilica die Virginis Conceptioni sacro quotannis esse peragendam. Atque exoptantes in fidelium animis quotidie magis fovere hanc de Immaculata Deiparæ Conceptione doctrinam, eorumque pietatem excitare ad ipsam Virginem sine labe

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our Lord the supreme care and power of feeding lambs and sheep, of confirming the brethren, and of ruling and governing the universal Church.

Indeed, Our predecessors have ever gloried in instituting in the Roman Church by their own Apostolic authority the Feast of the Conception, and to augment, ennoble, and promote with all their power the devotion thus instituted, by a proper Office and a proper Mass, by which the prerogative of immunity from hereditary stain was most manifestly asserted; to increase it either by indulgences granted, or by leave given to states, provinces, and kingdoms, that they might choose as their patron the Mother of God, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, or by approved sodalities, congregations, and religious families instituted to the honor of the Immaculate Conception; or by praises given to the piety of those who have erected monasteries, hospitals, or churches, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, or who have bound themselves by a religious vow to defend strenuously the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. Above all, they were happy to ordain that the Feast of the Conception should be celebrated through the whole Church as that of the Nativity; and, in fine, that it should be celebrated with an Octave in the universal Church as it was placed in the rank of the festivals which are commanded to be kept holy; also, that a Pontifical service in our Patriarchal Liberian Basilica should be performed yearly on the day sacred to the Conception of the Virgin; and desiring to cherish daily more and more in the minds of the Faithful this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and to excite their

originali conceptam colendam, et venerandam, gavisi sunt, quam libentissime facultatem tribuere, ut in Lauretanis Litaniis, et in ipsa Missæ præfatione Immaculatus ejusdem Virginis proclamaretur Conceptus, atque adeo lex credendi ipsa supplicandi lege statueretur. Nos porro tantorum Prædecessorum vestigiis inhærentes non solum quæ ab ipsis pietissime sapientissimeque fuerant constituta probavimus, et recepimus, verum etiam memores institutionis Sixti IV, proprium de Immaculata Conceptione Officium auctoritate Nostra munivimus, illiusque usum universæ Ecclesiæ lætissimo prorsus animo concessimus.

Quoniam vero quæ ad cultum pertinent, intimo plane vinculo cum ejusdem objecto conserta sunt, neque rata et fixa manere possunt, si illud anceps sit, et in ambiguo versetur, idcirco Decessores Nostri Romani Pontifices omni cura Conceptionis cultum amplificantes, illius etiam objectum ac doctrinam declarare, et inculcare impensissime studuerunt. Etenim clare aperteque docuere, festum agi de Virginis Conceptione, atque uti falsam, et ab Ecclesiæ mente alienissimam proscripserunt illorum opinionem, qui non Conceptionem ipsam, sed sanctificationem, ab Ecclesiæ coli arbitrarentur et affirmarent. Neque mitius cum iis agendum esse existimarunt, qui ab labefactandam de Immaculata Virginis Conceptione doctrinam excogitato inter primum atque alterum Conceptionis instans et momentum discrimine, asserebant, celebrari quidem Conceptionem, sed non pro primo instanti atque momento. Ipsi namque Prædecessores Nostri suarum partium esse duxerunt, et

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piety in worshipping and venerating the Virgin conceived without original sin, they have rejoiced most freely to give leave that in the Litany of Loretto, and in the Preface of the Mass itself, the Immaculate Conception of the same Virgin should be proclaimed, and that thus the law of faith should be established by the very law of supplication. We ourselves, treading in the footsteps of so many predecessors, have not only received and approved what had been most wisely and piously established and appointed by them, but also mindful of the institution of Sixtus IV, We have appointed by our authority a proper Office for the Immaculate Conception, and with a most joyful mind have granted the use of it to the universal Church.

But since those things which pertain to worship are evidently bound by an intimate cord to its object, and cannot remain fixed and determined, if it be doubtful, and placed in uncertainty, therefore Our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, increasing with all their care the devotion of the Conception, studied most especially to declare and inculcate its object and doctrine; for they taught clearly and openly that the festival was celebrated for the Conception of the Virgin, and they proscribed as false and most foreign to the intention of the Church the opinion of those who considered and affirmed that it was not the Conception itself, but the sanctification, to which devotion was paid by the Church. Nor did they think of treating more indulgently those who, in order to weaken the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, drawing a distinction between the first and second instant and moment of the Conception, asserted that the Conception was indeed celebrated, but not for the first instant and moment; for Our predecessors themselves thought it their duty to

beatissimæ Virginis Conceptionis festum, et Conceptionem pro primo instanti tanquam verum cultus objectum omni studio tueri ac propugnare. Hinc decretoria plane verba, quibus Alexander VII Prædecessor Noster sinceram Ecclesiæ mentem declaravit, inquit: "Sane vetus est Christifidelium erga ejus beatissimam Matrem Virginem Mariam pietas sentientium, ejus animam in primo instanti creationis, atque infusionis in corpus fuisse speciali Dei gratia et privilegio, intuitu meritorum Jesu Christi ejus Filii humani generis Redemptoris, a macula peccati originalis præservatam immunem, atque in hoc sensu ejus Conceptionis festivitatem, solemnî ritu colentium, et celebrantium."*

Atque illud in primis solemne quoque fuit iisdem Decessoribus Nostris doctrinam de Immaculatâ Dei Matris Conceptione sartam tectamque omni cura, studio et contentione tueri. Etenim non solum nullatenus passi sunt, ipsam doctrinam quovis modo a quopiam notari, atque traduci, verum etiam longe ulterius progressi perspicuis declarationibus, iteratisque vicibus edixerunt, doctrinam, qua Immaculatam Virginis Conceptionem profitemur, esse, suoque merito haberi cum ecclesiastico cultu plane consonam, eamque veterem, ac prope universalem et ejusmodi, quam Romana Ecclesia sibi fovendam, tuendamque suscepit, atque omnino dignam, quæ in sacra ipsa Liturgia, solemnibusque precibus usurparetur. Neque his contenti, ut ipsa de Immaculato Virginis Conceptu doctrina inviolata persisteret, opinionem huic doctrinæ adversam sive publice, sive privatim defendi posse severissime prohibuere,

* Alexander VII Const. Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum VIII Decembris 1661.

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protect and defend with all zeal both the feast of the Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, and the Conception from the first instant as the true object of devotion. Hence the words, evidently decretive, in which Alexander VII, declared the true intention of the Church, saying: "Certainly, it is the ancient piety of the faithful of Christ towards His Most Blessed Mother the Virgin Mary, believing that her soul, in the first instant of creation, and of infusion into the body, was by a special grace and privilege of God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ her Son the Redeemer of mankind, preserved free from the stain of original sin, and in this sense they keep and celebrate with solemn rites the Festival of her Conception."

And to the same, Our predecessors, this also was most especially a duty to preserve from contention the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, guarded and protected with all care and zeal. For not only have they never suffered that this doctrine should ever be censured or traduced in any way, or by any one, but they have gone much farther, and in clear declarations on repeated occasions they have proclaimed that the doctrine in which we confess the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin is, and by its own merit, held evidently consistent with Ecclesiastical worship, that it is ancient and nearly universal, and of the same sort as that which the Roman Church has undertaken to cherish and protect, and, above all, worthy to be placed in its sacred liturgy and its solemn prayers. Nor content with this, in order that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin should remain inviolate, they have most severely prohibited the opinion adverse to this doctrine to be de-

eamque multiplici veluti vulnere confectam esse voluerunt. Quibus repetitis luculentissimisque declarationibus, ne inanes viderentur, adjecere sanctionem; quæ omnia laudatus Prædecessor Noster Alexander VII his verbis est complexus:—

“Nos considerantes, quod Sancta Romana Ecclesia de Intemerata semper Virginis Mariæ Conceptione festum solemniter celebrat, et speciale ac proprium super hoc officium olim ordinavit juxta piam, devotam, et laudabilem institutionem, quæ a Sixto IV Prædecessore Nostro tunc emanavit; volentesque laudabili huic pietati et devotioni et festo, ac cultui secundum illam exhibito, in Ecclesia Romana post ipsius cultus institutionem nunquam immutato, Romanorum Pontificum Prædecessorum Nostrorum exemplo, favere, nec non tueri pietatem, et devotionem hanc colendi, et celebrandi beatissimam Virginem, præveniente scilicet Spiritus Sancti gratia, a peccato originali præservatam, cupientesque, in Christi grege unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis, sedatis offensionibus, et jurgiis, amotisque scandalis conservare: ad præfatorum Episcoporum cum Ecclesiarum suarum Capitulis, ac Philippi Regis, ejusque Regnorum oblatam Nobis instantiam, ac preces; Constitutiones, et Decreta, a Romanis Pontificibus Prædecessoribus Nostris, et præcipue a Sixto IV, Paulo V, et Gregorio XV edita in favorem sententiæ asserentis, Animam beatæ Mariæ Virginis in sui creatione, et in corpus infusione, Spiritus Sancti gratia donatam, et a peccato originali præservatam fuisse, necnon et in favorem festi, et cultus Conceptionis ejusdem Virginis Deiparæ, secundum piam istam sententiam, ut præfertur, exhibiti, innova-

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fended either in public or in private, and they have wished to crush it, as it were, by repeated blows. To which reiterated and most clear declarations, lest they might appear empty, they added a sanction; all which things Our illustrious predecessor, Alexander VII, embraced in these words:—

“Considering that the Holy Roman Church solemnly celebrates the festival of the Conception of the Immaculate and Ever-Blessed Virgin, and has appointed for this a special and proper office according to the pious, devout, and laudable institution which emanated from Our predecessor, Sixtus IV, and wishing, after the example of the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, to favor this laudable piety, devotion, and festival, and the reverence shown towards it, never changed in the Roman Church since the institution of the worship itself; also in order to protect the piety and devotion of venerating and celebrating the Most Blessed Virgin, preserved from original sin by the preventing grace of the Holy Ghost, and desiring to preserve in the flock of Christ unity of spirit in the bond of peace, removing offences, and brawls, and scandals; at the instance and prayers of the said Bishops, with the Chapters of their churches, and of King Philip and his kingdoms,—We renew the constitutions and decrees issued by the Roman Pontiffs, Our predecessors, and especially by Sixtus IV, Paul V, and Gregory XV, in favor of asserting the opinion that the soul of the Blessed Virgin, in its creation and infusion into the body, was endowed with the grace of the Holy Ghost, and preserved from original sin; likewise, also, in favor of the festival of the same Virgin Mother of God, celebrated according to that pious belief which is recited above, and We command that it

mus, et sub censuris, et pœnis in eisdem Constitutionibus contentis, observari mandamus.

“Et insuper omnes et singulos, qui præfatas Constitutiones, seu Decreta ita pergent interpretari, ut favorem per illas dictæ sententiæ, et festo seu cultui secundum illam exhibito, frustrentur, vel qui eandem sententiam, festum seu cultum in disputationem revocare, aut contra ea quoquo modo directe, vel indirecte aut quovis prætextu, etiam definibilitatis ejus examinandæ, sive Sacram Scripturam, aut Sanctos Patres, sive Doctores glossandi vel interpretandi, denique alio quovis prætextu seu occasione, scripto seu voce loqui, concionari, tractare, disputare, contra ea quidquam determinando, aut asserendo, vel argumenta contra ea afferendo, et insoluta relinquendo, aut alio quovis inexcogitabili modo disserendo ausi fuerint; præter pœnas et censuras in Constitutionibus Sixti IV contentas, quibus illos subjacere volumus, et per præsentis subjicimus, etiam concionandi, publice legendi, seu docendi, et interpretandi facultate, ac voce activa et passiva in quibuscumque electionibus, eo ipso absque alia declaratione privatos esse volumus; necnon ad concionandum, publice legendum, docendum, et interpretandum perpetuæ inhabilitatis pœnas ipso facto incurrere absque alia declaratione; a quibus pœnis nonnisi a Nobis ipsis, vel a Successoribus Nostris Romanis Pontificibus absolvi, aut super iis dispensari possint; necnon eosdem aliis pœnis, nostro, et eorumdem Romanorum Pontificum Successorum Nostrorum arbitrio infligendis, pariter subjacere volumus, prout subjicimus per præsentis innovantes Pauli V et Gregorii XV superius memoratas Constitutiones sive Decreta.

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"And against all and each of those who try to interpret the aforesaid constitutions or decrees so that they may frustrate the favor shown through these to the said belief and to the festival or worship celebrated according to it, or who try to call into dispute the same belief, festival, or worship, or against these in any manner, either directly or indirectly, and on any pretext, even that of examining the grounds of defining it, or of explaining or interpreting the Sacred Scriptures or the Holy Fathers or Doctors; in fine, who should dare under any pretext or on any occasion whatsoever, to say either in writing or in speech, to preach, to treat, to dispute, by determining or asserting anything against these, or by bringing arguments against them and leaving these arguments unanswered, or by expressing dissent in any other possible manner; besides the punishments and censures contained in the constitutions of Sixtus IV, to which we desire to add, and by these presents do add, those: We will that they should be deprived *ipso facto*, and without other declaration of the faculty of preaching, of reading in public, or of teaching and interpreting, and also of their voice, whether active or passive, in elections; from which censures they cannot be absolved, nor obtain dispensation, unless from Us, or Our successors, the Roman Pontiffs; likewise, We wish to subject, and We hereby do subject, the same persons to other penalties to be inflicted at Our will, and at that of the same Roman Pontiffs, Our successors, renewing the constitutions or decrees of Paul IV, and Gregory XV, above referred to.

"And We prohibit, under the penalties and censures

cultus secundum illam in dubium revocatur aut contra ea quomodocumque, ut supra, aliquid scribitur aut legitur, seu locutiones, conciones, tractatus, et disputationes contra eadem continentur; post Pauli V supra laudatum Decretum edita, aut in posterum quomodolibet edenda, prohibemus sub pœnis et censuris in Indice Librorum prohibitorum contentis, et ipso facto absque alia declaratione pro expresse prohibitis haberi volumus et mandamus."

Omnes autem norunt quanto studio hæc de Immaculata Deiparæ Virginis Conceptione doctrina a spectatissimis Religiosis Familiis, et celebrioribus Theologicis Academiis ac præstantissimis rerum divinarum scientia Doctoribus fuerit tradita, asserta ac propugnata. Omnes pariter norunt quantopere solliciti fuerint Sacrorum Antistites vel in ipsis ecclesiasticis conventibus palam publiceque profiteri, sanctissimam Dei Genitricem Virginem Mariam ob prævisa Christi Domini Redemptoris merita numquam originali subjacuisse peccato, sed præservatam omnino fuisse ab originis labe, et idcirco sublimiori modo redemptam. Quibus illud profecto gravissimum, omnino maximum accedit, ipsam quoque Tridentinam Synodum, cum dogmaticum de peccato originali ederet decretum, quo juxta sacrarum Scripturarum, sanctorumque Patrum, ac probatissimorum Conciliorum testimonia statuit, ac defini- vit, omnes homines nasci originali culpa infectos, tamen solemniter declarasse, non esse suæ intentionis in decreto ipso, tantaque definitionis amplitudine comprehendere beatam et immaculatam Virginem Dei Genitricem Mariam. Hac enim declaratione Tridentini Patres, ipsam Beatissimam Virginem ab originali labe solutam pro rerum

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contained in the Index of Prohibited Books, and We will and declare that they should be esteemed prohibited *ipso facto*, and without other declaration, books in which the aforesaid belief and the festival or devotion celebrated according to it is recalled into dispute, or in which anything whatever is written or read against these, or lectures, sermons, treatises, and disputations against the same, published after the decree of Paul V above mentioned, or to be published at any future time."

All are aware with how much zeal this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God has been handed down, asserted and propagated by the most distinguished religious Orders, the most celebrated theological academies, and the most eminent doctors of the science of Divinity. All know likewise how anxious have been the Bishops openly and publicly to profess, even in the ecclesiastical assemblies themselves, that the Most Holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, by virtue of the merits of Christ Our Lord, the Saviour of mankind, never lay under original sin, but was preserved free from the original stain, and thus was redeemed in a more sublime manner. To which, lastly, is added this fact, most grave and, in an especial manner, most important of all, that the Council of Trent itself, when it promulgated the dogmatic decree concerning original sin, in which, according to the testimonies of the Sacred Scriptures, of the Holy Fathers, and of the most approved councils, it determined and defined that all mankind are born under original sin; solemnly declared, however, that it was not its intention to include in the decree itself, and in the amplitude of its definition, the Blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Indeed, by this declaration, the Tri-

temporumque adjunctis satis innuerunt, atque adeo perspicue significarunt, nihil ex divinis litteris, nihil ex traditione, Patrumque auctoritate rite afferri posse, quod tantæ Virginis prærogativæ quovis modo refragetur.

Et re quidem vera hanc de Immaculata beatissimæ Virginis Conceptione doctrinam quotidie magis gravissimo Ecclesiæ sensu, magisterio, studio, scientia, ac sapientia tam splendide explicatam, declaratam, confirmatam, et apud omnes catholici orbis populos, ac nationes mirandum in modum propagatam, in ipsa Ecclesia semper extitisse veluti a majoribus acceptam, ac revelatæ doctrinæ characterem insignitam illustria venerandæ antiquitatis, Ecclesiæ orientalis et occidentalis monumenta validissime testantur. Christi enim Ecclesia sedula depositorum aquæ se dogmatum custos, et vindex, nihil in his unquam permutat, nihil minuit, nihil addit, sed omni industria vetera fideliter sapienterque tractando, si qua antiquitus informata sunt, et Patrum fides sevit, ita limare, expolire studet, ut prisca illa cœlestis doctrinæ dogmata accipiant evidentiam, lucem, distinctionem, sed retineant plenitudinem, integritatem, proprietatem, ac in suo tantum genere crescant, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu, eademque sententia.

Equidem Patres, Ecclesiæque Scriptores cœlestibus edocti eloquiis nihil antiquius habuere, quam in libris ad explicandas Scripturas, vindicanda dogmata, erudiendosque fideles elucubratissimam Virginis sanctitatem, dignitatem, atque ab omni peccati labe integritatem, ejusque præclaram de teterrimo humani generis hoste victoriam

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dentine Fathers have asserted, according to the times and the circumstances of affairs, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was free from the original stain, and thus clearly signified that nothing could be justly adduced from the sacred writings, nor from the authority of the Fathers, which would in any way gainsay so great a prerogative of the Virgin.

And, in real truth, illustrious monuments of a venerated antiquity of the Eastern and of the Western Church most powerfully testify that this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, every day more and more so splendidly explained and confirmed by the highest authority, teaching, zeal, science, and wisdom of the Church, and so wonderfully propagated amongst all the nations and peoples of the Catholic world, always existed in the Church as received by Our ancestors, and stamped with the character of a divine revelation. For the Church of Christ, careful guardian and defender of the dogmas deposited with her, changes nothing in them, diminishes nothing, adds nothing, but, with all industry, by faithfully and wisely treating ancient things, if they are handed down from antiquity, so studies to eliminate, to clear them up, that these ancient dogmas of heavenly faith may receive evidence, light, distinction, but still may retain their fullness, integrity, propriety, and may increase only in their own kind—that is, in the same dogma, the same sense, and the same belief.

The Fathers and writers of the Church, taught by the heavenly writings, had nothing more at heart, in the books written to explain the Scriptures, to vindicate the dogmas, and to instruct the faithful, than emulously to declare and exhibit in many and wonderful ways the Virgin's most high sanctity, dignity, and freedom from all stain of origi-

multis mirisque modis certatim prædicare atque efferre. Quapropter enarrantes verba, quibus Deus præparata renovandis mortalibus suæ pietatis remedia inter ipsa mundi primordia prænuntians et deceptoris serpentis retudit audaciam, et nostri generis spem mirifice erexit inquiring, "Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, semen tuum et semen illius," docuere, divino hoc oraculo clare aperteque præmonstratum fuisse misericordem humani generis Redemptorem, scilicet Unigenitum Dei Filium Christum Jesum, ac designatam beatissimam Ejus matrem Virginem Mariam, ac simul ipsissimas utriusque contra diabolum inimicitias insigniter expressas. Quocirca sicut Christus Dei hominumque mediator humana assumpta natura delens quod adversus nos erat chirographum decreti, illud cruci triumphator affixit, sic sanctissima Virgo arcissimo, et indissolubili vinculo cum Eo conjuncta una cum Illo, et per Illum sempiternas contra venenosum serpentem inimicitias exercens, ac de ipso plenissime triumphans illius caput immaculato pede contrivit.

Hunc eximium, singularemque Virginis triumphum, excellentissimamque innocentiam, puritatem, sanctitatem, ejusque ab omni peccati labe integritatem, atque ineffabilem coelestium omnium gratiarum, virtutum, ac privilegiorum copiam, et magnitudinem iidem Patres viderunt tum in arca illa Noe, quæ divinitus constituta a communi totius mundi naufragio plane salva et incolumis evasit; tum in scala illa, quam de terra ad cælum usque pertingere vidit Jacob, cujus gradibus Angeli Dei ascendebant et descendebant, cujusque vertici ipse innitebatur Dominus; tum in rubo illo, quem in loco sancto Moyses undique ardere, ac

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nal sin, and her renowned victory over the most foul enemy of the human race. Wherefore, repeating the words in which, at the beginning of the world, the Almighty, announcing the remedies of his mercy, prepared for regenerating mankind, crushed the audacity of the lying Serpent, and wonderfully raised up the hope of our race, saying: "I will place enmity between thee and the woman, thy seed and hers," they taught that in this divine oracle was clearly and openly pointed out the merciful Redeemer of the human race—the only-begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus, and that his Most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was designated, and at the same time that the enmity of both against the Serpent was signally expressed. Wherefore, as Christ, the mediator of God and men, having assumed human nature, blotting out the handwriting of the decree which stood against us, fastened it triumphantly to the Cross, so the Most Holy Virgin, bound by a most close and indissoluble chain with Him, exercising with Him and through Him eternal enmity against the malignant Serpent, and triumphing most amply over the same, has crushed his head with her immaculate foot.

This illustrious and singular triumph of the Virgin, and her most exalted innocence, purity, and holiness, her freedom from all stain of sin, and ineffable abundance and greatness of all heavenly graces, virtues, and privileges, the same Fathers beheld in that ark of Noah, which, divinely appointed, escaped safe and sound from the common shipwreck of the whole world; also in that ladder which Jacob beheld reaching from earth to heaven, by whose steps the Angels of God ascended and descended, on whose top leaned God himself; also in that bush which, in the holy place, Moses beheld blaze on every

inter crepitantes ignis flammæ non jam comburi aut jacturam vel minimam pati, sed pulchre virescere ac florescere conspexit; tum in illa inexpugnabili turri a facie inimici, ex qua mille clypei pendent, omnisque armatura fortium; tum in horto illo concluso, qui nescit violari, neque corrumpi ullis insidiarum fraudibus; tum in corusca illa Dei civitate, cujus fundamenta in montibus sanctis; tum in augustissimo illo Dei templo, quod divinis refulgens splendoribus plenum est gloria Domini; tum in aliis ejusdem generis omnino plurimis, quibus excelsam Deiparæ dignitatem; ejusque illibatam innocentiam, et nulli unquam nævo obnoxiam sanctitatem insigniter prænunciatam fuisse Patres tradiderunt.

Ad hanc eandem divinorum munerum veluti summam, originaleque Virginis, de qua natus est Jesus, integritatem describendam iidem Prophetarum adhibentes eloquia non aliter ipsam augustam Virginem concelebrarunt, ac uti columbam mundam, et sanctam Jerusalem, et excelsum Dei thronum, et arcam sanctificationis et domum, quam sibi æterna ædificavit Sapientia, et Reginam illam, quæ deliciis affluens, et innixa super Dilectum suum ex ore Altissimi prodivit omnino perfecta, speciosa ac penitus cara Deo, et nullo unquam labis nævo maculata. Cum vero ipsi Patres, Ecclesiæque Scriptores animo menteque reputarent, beatissimam Virginem ab Angelo Gabriele sublimissimam Dei Matris dignitatem ei nuntiante, ipsius Dei nomine et jussu gratia plenam fuisse nuncupatam, docuerunt hac singulari solemni salutatione numquam alias audita ostendi, Deiparam fuisse omnium divinarum gratiarum sedem, omnibusque divini Spiritus charismatibus

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side, and amidst the crackling flames neither to be consumed nor to suffer the least injury, but to grow green and to blossom fairly; also in that impregnable tower in front of the enemy, on which are hung a thousand bucklers and all the armor of the brave; also in that garden fenced round about, which cannot be violated nor corrupted by any schemes of fraud; also in that brilliant city of God, whose foundations are in the holy mounts; also in that most august temple of God, which, shining with divine splendor, is filled with the glory of God; likewise in many other things of this kind which the Fathers have handed down, that the exalted dignity of the Mother of God and her spotless innocence, and her holiness, obnoxious to no blemish, have been signally preannounced.

To describe the same totality, as it were, of divine gifts, and the original integrity of the Virgin of whom Jesus was born, the same Fathers, using the eloquence of the Prophets, celebrate the august Virgin as the spotless dove, the holy Jerusalem, the exalted throne of God, the ark and house of sanctification, which Eternal Wisdom built for itself; and as that Queen who, abounding in delights and leaning on her beloved, came forth entirely perfect from the mouth of the Most High, fair and most dear to God, and never stained with the least spot. But when the same Fathers and the writers of the Church revolved in their hearts and minds that the Most Blessed Virgin, in the name and by the order of God himself, was proclaimed full of grace by the Angel Gabriel, when announcing her most sublime dignity of the Mother of God, they taught that, by this singular and solemn salutation, never heard on any other occasion, is shown that the Mother of God is the seat of all divine graces, and adorned with all

exornatam, immo eorundem charismatum infinitum prope thesaurum, abyssumque inexhaustam, adeo ut nunquam maledicto obnoxia, et una cum Filio perpetuæ benedictionis particeps ab Elisabeth divino acta Spiritu audire meruerit, *benedicta Tu inter mulieres, et benedictus fructus ventris tui.*

Hinc non luculenta minus, quam concors eorundem sententia, gloriosissimam Virginem, cui fecit magna, qui Potens est, ea cœlestium omnium donorum vi, ea gratiæ plenitudine, eaque innocentia emicuisse, qua veluti ineffabile Dei miraculum, immo omnium miraculorum apex, ac digna Dei mater extiterit, et ad Deum ipsum pro ratione creatæ naturæ, quam proxime accedens omnibus, qua humanis, qua angelicis præconiis celsior evaserit. Atque ideo ad originalem Dei Genitricis innocentiam, justitiæque vindicandam, non Eam modo cum Heva adhuc virgine, adhuc innocente, adhuc incorrupta, et nondum mortiferis fraudulentissimi serpentis insidiis decepta sapissime contulerunt, verum etiam mira quadam verborum, sententiarumque varietate prætulerunt. Heva enim serpenti misere obsequuta et ab originali excidit innocentia, et illius mancipium evasit, sed Beatissima Virgo originale donum jugiter augens, quin serpenti aures unquam præbuerit, illius vim potestatemque virtute divinitus accepta funditus labefactavit.

Quapropter numquam cessarunt Deiparam appellare vel lilium inter spinas, vel terram omnino intactam, virgineam, illibatam, immaculatam, semper benedictam, et ab omni peccati contagione liberam, ex qua novus formatus est Adam, vel irreprehensibilem, lucidissimum, amœnissimumque innocentiae, immortalitatis, ac deliciarum paradisum a

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the gifts of the Holy Ghost—yea, the infinite storehouse and inexhaustible abyss of the same gifts; so that, never subjected to malediction, and alone with her Son partaker of perpetual benediction, she deserved to hear from Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost: "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

Hence it is the clear and unanimous opinion of the same that the most glorious Virgin, for whom He who is powerful has done great things, has shone with such a brilliancy of all heavenly gifts, such fullness of grace, and such innocence, that she has been an ineffable miracle of the Almighty, yea, the crown of all miracles, and worthy Mother of God; that she approaches as nearly to God as created nature can do, and is more exalted than all human and angelic encomiums.

And, therefore, to vindicate the original innocence and justice of the Mother of God, they not only compared her to Eve, as yet virgin, as yet innocent, as yet incorrupted, and not yet deceived by the most deadly snares of the most treacherous serpent, but they have preferred her with a wonderful variety of thought and expression. For Eve, miserably obeying the serpent, fell from original innocence, and became his slave, but the Most Blessed Virgin, ever increasing her original gift, not only never lent an ear to the serpent, but by a virtue divinely received utterly broke his power.

Wherefore they have never ceased to call the Mother of God the lily amongst the thorns, earth entirely untouched, virgin, undefiled, immaculate, ever blessed, and free from all contagion of sin, from which was formed the new Adam, a reproachless, most sweet paradise of innocence, immortality, and delights, planted by God himself,

Deo ipso consitum et ab omnibus venenosi serpentis insidiis defensum, vel lignum immarcescibile, quod peccati vermis nunquam corruperit, vel fontem semper illimem, et Spiritus Sancti virtute signatum, vel divinissimum templum, vel immortalitatis thesaurum, vel unam et solam non mortis sed vitæ filiam, non iræ sed gratiæ germen, quod semper virens ex corrupta, infectaque radice singulari Dei providentia præter statas communesque legis effloruerit. Sed quasi hæc, licet splendidissima, satis non forent, propriis definitisque sententiis edixerunt, nullam prorsus, cum de peccatis agitur, habendam esse quæstionem de sancta Virgine Maria, cui plus gratiæ collatum fuit ad vincendum omni ex parte peccatum; tum professi sunt, gloriosissimam Virginem fuisse parentum reparatricem, posteriorum vivificatricem, a sæculo electam, ab Altissimo sibi præparatam, a Deo, quando ad serpentem ait, inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, prædictam, quæ procul dubio venenatum ejusdem serpentis caput contrivit; ac propterea affirmarunt, eandem Beatissimam Virginem fuisse per gratiam ab omni peccati labe integram, ac liberam ab omni contagione et corporis, et animæ, et intellectus, ac semper cum Deo conversatam, et sempiterno fœdere cum Illo conjunctam, numquam fuisse in tenebris, sed semper in luce, et idcirco idoneum plane extitisse Christo habitaculum non pro habitu corporis, sed pro gratia originali.

Accedunt nobilissima effata, quibus de Virginis Conceptione loquentes testati sunt, naturam gratiæ cessisse ac stetisse tremulam pergere non sustinentem; nam futurum erat, ut Dei Genitrix Virgo non antea ex Anna conciperetur, quam gratia fructum ederet; concipi siquidem primo-

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and fenced from all snares of the malignant serpent, incorruptible branch that the worm of sin has never injured; fountain ever clear, and marked by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, a most divine temple, or treasure of immortality, or the sole and only daughter not of death but of life, the seed not of enmity but of grace, which by the singular providence of God has always flourished, springing from a corrupt and imperfect root, contrary to the settled and common laws. But if these encomiums, though most splendid, were not sufficient, they proclaimed in proper and defined opinions that when sin was to be treated of, no question should be entertained concerning the Holy Virgin Mary, to whom an abundance of grace was given, to conquer sin completely. They also declared that the most glorious Virgin was the reparatrix of her parents, the vivifier of posterity, chosen from the ages, prepared for himself by the Most High, predicted by God when he said to the serpent, "I will place enmity between thee and the woman," who undoubtedly has crushed the poisonous head of the same serpent; and therefore they affirm that the same Blessed Virgin was through grace perfectly free from every stain of sin, and from all contagion of body and soul and mind, and always conversant with God, and united with him in an eternal covenant, never was in darkness but always in light, and therefore was plainly a fit habitation for Christ, not on account of her bodily state, but on account of her original grace.

To these things are added the noble words in which, speaking of the Conception of the Virgin, they have testified that nature yielded to grace and stood trembling, not being able to proceed further; for it was to be that the Virgin Mother of God should not be conceived by Anna

genitam oportebat, ex qua concipiendus esset omnis creature primogenitus. Testati sunt carnem Virginis ex Adam sumptam maculas Adæ non admisisse, ac propterea Beatissimam Virginem tabernaculum esse ab ipso Deo creatum, Spiritu Sancto formatum, et purpureæ revera operæ, quod novus ille Beseleel auro intextum variumque effinxit, eandemque esse meritoque celebrari ut illam, quæ proprium Dei opus primum extiterit, ignitis maligni telis latuerit, et pulchra natura, ac labis prorsus omnia nescia, tamquam aurora undequaque rutilans in mundum prodierit in sua Conceptione Immaculata. Non enim decebat, ut illud vas electionis communibus lacesseretur injuriis, quoniam plurimum a cæteris differens, natura communicavit non culpa; immo prorsus decebat, ut sicut Unigenitus in cælis Patrem habuit, quem Seraphim ter sanctum extollunt, ita matrem haberet in terris, quæ nitore sanctitatis nunquam caruerit. Atque hæc quidem doctrina adeo majorum mentes, animosque occupavit, ut singularis et omnino mirus penes illos invaluerit loquendi usus, quo Deiparam sæpiissime compellarunt immaculatam, omnique ex parte immaculatam, innocentem et innocentissimam, illibatam et undequaque illibatam, sanctam et ab omni peccati sorde alienissimam, totam puram, totam intemeratam, ac ipsam prope puritatis et innocentiae formam, pulchritudine pulchriorem, venustate venustiore, sanctiorem sanctitate, solamque sanctam, purissimamque anima et corpore, quæ supergressa est omnem integritatem et virginitatem, et sola tota facta domicilium universarum gra-

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before grace should bear fruit. For she ought thus to be conceived as the first born, from whom should be conceived the first born of every creature. They have testified that the flesh of the Virgin, taken from Adam, did not admit the stains of Adam, and on this account that the Most Blessed Virgin was the tabernacle created by God himself, formed by the Holy Spirit, truly enriched with purple which that new Beseleel made, adorned and woven with gold; and that this same Virgin is, and deservedly is celebrated as she who was the first and the peculiar work of God, escaped from the fiery weapons of evil, and fair by nature, and entirely free from all stain, came into the world all shining like the morn in her Immaculate Conception; nor, truly, was it right that this vessel of election should be assailed by common injuries, since, differing very much from others, she had community with them only in their nature, not in their fault.

Moreover, it was right that, as the Only Begotten had a Father in heaven, whom the Seraphim proclaimed thrice holy, so he should have a Mother on the earth, who should never want the splendor of holiness. And this doctrine, indeed, so filled the minds and souls of our forefathers that a marvellous and singular form of speech prevailed with them, in which they very frequently called the Mother of God immaculate and entirely immaculate, innocent and most innocent, spotless, holy, and most distant from every stain of sin, all pure, all perfect, the type and model of purity and innocence, more beautiful than beauty, more gracious than grace, more holy than holiness, and alone holy, and most pure in soul and body, who has surpassed all perfectitude and all virginity, and has become the dwelling-place of all the graces of the Most

tiarum Sanctissimi Spiritus, et quæ, solo Deo excepto, extitit cunctis superior, et ipsis Cherubim et Seraphim, et omni exercitu Angelorum *natura pulchrior, formosior, et sanctior*, cui prædicandæ cœlestes et terrenæ linguæ minime sufficiunt. Quem usum ad sanctissimæ quoque liturgiæ monumenta atque ecclesiastica officia sua veluti sponte fuisse traductum, et in illis passim recurrere, ampliturque dominari nemo ignorat, cum in illis Deipara invocetur et prædicetur veluti una, incorrupta pulchritudinis columba, veluti rosa semper vicens, et undequaque purissima, et semper immaculata semperque beata ac celebretur uti innocentia, quæ numquam fuit læsa, et altera Heva, quæ Emmanuelem peperit.

Nil igitur mirum si de Immaculata Deiparæ Virginis Conceptione doctrinam iudicio Patrum divinis litteris consignatam, tot gravissimis eorundem testimoniis traditam, tot illustribus venerandæ antiquitatis monumentis expressam et celebratam, ac maximo gravissimoque Ecclesiæ iudicio propositam et confirmatam tanta pietate, religione et amore ipsius Ecclesiæ Pastores, populi que fideles quotidie magis profiteri sint gloriati, ut nihil iisdem dulcius, nihil carius, quam ferventissimo affectu Deiparam Virginem absque labe originali conceptam ubique colere, venerari, invocare, et prædicare. Quamobrem ab antiquis temporibus Sacrorum Antistites, Ecclesiastici viri, regulares Ordines, ac vel ipsi Imperatores et Reges ab hac Apostolica Sede enixe efflagitarunt, ut Immaculata sanctissimæ Dei Genitricis Conceptio veluti catholicæ fidei dogma definiretur. Quæ postulationes hac nostra quoque ætate iteratæ fuerunt ac potissimum felicitis recordationis

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Holy Spirit, and who, God alone excepted, is superior to all, and by nature fairer, more beautiful, and more holy than the cherubim and seraphim; she whom all the tongues of heaven and earth do not suffice to extol. No one is ignorant that these forms of speech have passed, as it were, spontaneously into the monuments of the most holy liturgy, and the Offices of the Church, and that they occur often in them and abound amply; and that the Mother of God is invoked and named in them as a spotless dove of beauty, as a rose ever blooming and perfectly pure, and ever spotless and ever blessed, and is celebrated as innocence which was never wounded, and a second Eve who brought forth Emmanuel.

It is no wonder, then, if the Pastors of the Church and the faithful people have daily more and more gloried to profess with so much piety and fervor this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God, pointed out in the Sacred Scriptures, according to the judgment of the Fathers, handed down in so many mighty testimonies of the same, expressed and celebrated in so many illustrious monuments of a revered antiquity, and proposed, and with great piety confirmed by the greatest and highest judgment of the Church; so that nothing would be more dear, more pleasing to the same than everywhere to worship, venerate, invoke, and proclaim the Virgin Mother of God conceived without original stain. Wherefore from the ancient times the Princes of the Church, Ecclesiastics, and even emperors and kings themselves, have earnestly entreated of this Apostolic See that the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God should be defined as a dogma of Catholic faith. Which entreaties were renewed also in these Our times,

Gregorio XVI Prædecessori Nostro, ac Nobis ipsis oblata sunt tum ab Episcopis, tum a clero sæculari, tum a Religiosis Familiis, ac summis Principibus et fidelibus populis.

Nos itaque singulari animi Nostri gaudio hæc omnia probe noscentes, ac serio considerantes, vix dum licet immeriti arcano divinæ Providentiæ consilio ad hanc sublimem Petri Cathedram evecti totius Ecclesiæ gubernacula tractanda suscepimus, nihil certe antiquius habuimus, quam pro summa Nostra vel a teneris annis erga sanctissimam Dei Genitricem Virginem Mariam veneratione, pietate et affectu ea omnia peragere, quæ adhuc in Ecclesiæ votis esse poterant, ut Beatissimæ Virginis honor augeretur, ejusque prærogativæ, uberiori luce niterent. Omnem autem maturitatem adhibere volentes constituimus peculiarem VV. FF. NN. S. R. E. Cardinalium religione, consilio, ac divinarum rerum scientia illustrium Congregationem, et viros ex clero tum sæculari, tum regulari, theologicis disciplinis apprime excultos selegimus, ut ea omnia, quæ Immaculatam Virginis Conceptionem respiciunt, accuratissime perpendeant, propriamque sententiam ad Nos deferrent. Quamvis autem Nobis ex receptis postulationibus de definienda tandem aliquando Immaculata Virginis Conceptione perspectus esset plurimorum Sacrorum Antistitum sensus, tamen Encyclicas Litteras die 2 Februarii anno 1849 Cajetæ datas ad omnes Venerabiles Fratres totius catholici orbis Sacrorum Antistites misimus, ut, adhibitis ad Deum precibus, Nobis scripto etiam significarent, quæ esset suorum fidelium erga Immacula-

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and especially were addressed to Gregory XVI, Our predecessor of happy memory, and to Ourselves, not only by Bishops, but by the secular clergy, religious Orders, by the greatest princes, and by the faithful people.

Therefore, with singular joy of mind, well knowing all these things, and seriously considering them, scarcely had We, though unworthy, been raised by a mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence to the exalted Chair of Peter, and undertaken the government of the whole Church, than, following the veneration, the piety, and love We had entertained for the Blessed Virgin from Our tender years, We had nothing at heart more than to accomplish all these things which as yet were amongst the ardent wishes of the Church, that the honor of the Most Blessed Virgin should be increased, and her prerogatives should shine with a fuller light. But wishing to bring to this full maturity, We appointed a special congregation of our venerable brothers, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, illustrious by their piety, their wisdom, and their knowledge of the sacred sciences, and we also selected Ecclesiastics, both secular and regular, well trained in theological discipline, that they should most carefully weigh all those things which relate to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and report to us their opinion. And, although from the entreaties lately received by us for at length defining the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, the opinions of most of the Bishops of the Church were understood; however, We sent Encyclic Letters, dated at Gaeta, the 2d day of February, in the year 1849, to all our Venerable Brethren the Bishops of all the Catholic world, in order that having offered prayers to God they might signify to Us, in writing, what was the piety and devotion of

tam Deiparæ Conceptionem pietas, ac devotio, et quid ipsi præsertim Antistites de hac ipsa definitione ferenda sentirent, quidve exoptarent, ut, quo fieri solemnius posset, supremum Nostrum iudicium proferremus.

Non mediocri certe solatio affecti fuimus ubi eorundem Venerabilium Fratrum ad Nos responsa venerunt. Nam iidem incredibili quadam jucunditate, lætitia, ac studio Nobis rescribentes non solum singularem suam, et proprii cujusque cleri, populique fidelis erga Immaculatum Beatissimæ Virginis Conceptum pietatem, mentemque denuo confirmarunt, verum etiam communi veluti voto a Nobis expostularunt, ut Immaculata ipsius Virginis Conceptio supremo Nostro iudicio et auctoritate definiretur. Nec minori certe interim gaudio perfusi sumus, cum VV. FF. NN. S. R. E. Cardinales commemoratæ peculiaris Congregationis, et prædicti Theologi Consultores a Nobis electi pari alacritate et studio post examen diligenter adhibitum hanc de Immaculata Deiparæ Conceptione definitionem a Nobis efflagitaverint.

Post hæc illustribus Prædecessorum Nostrorum vestigiis inhærentes, ac rite recteque procedere optantes indiximus et habuimus Consistorium, in quo Venerabiles Fratres Nostros Sanctæ Romanæ Ecclesiæ Cardinales alloquuti sumus, eosque summa animi Nostri consolatione audivimus a Nobis exposcere, ut dogmaticam de Immaculata Deiparæ Virginis Conceptione definitionem emittere vellemus.

Itaque plurimum in Domino confisi advenisse temporum opportunitatem pro Immaculata sanctissimæ Dei Genetricis Virginis Mariæ Conceptione definienda, quam divina eloquia, veneranda traditio, perpetuus Ecclesiæ sensus, sin-

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their flocks towards the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and especially what the Bishops themselves thought about promulgating the definition, or what they desired in order that We might pronounce Our supreme judgment as solemnly as possible.

Certainly, we were filled with no slight consolation when the replies of our Venerable Brethren came to Us. For, with an incredible joyfulness, gladness, and zeal, they not only confirmed their own singular piety, and that of their clergy and faithful people, towards the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, but they even entreated of us with a common voice that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin should be defined by Our supreme judgment and authority. Nor, indeed, were We filled with less joy when our venerable brothers, the Cardinals of the Special Congregation aforesaid, and the consulting theologians chosen by Us, after a diligent examination, demanded from Us with equal alacrity and zeal this definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.

Afterwards walking in the illustrious footsteps of Our predecessors, and desiring to proceed duly and properly, We proclaimed and held a Consistory, in which We addressed Our Brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and with the greatest consolation of mind We heard them entreat of Us that We should promulgate the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God.

Therefore having full trust in the Lord that the opportune time had come for defining the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary Mother of God, which the Divine words, venerable tradition, the perpetual opinion

gularis catholicorum Antistitum ac fidelium conspiratio, et insignia prædecessorum nostrorum acta, et constitutiones mirifice illustrent atque declarant; rebus omnibus diligentissime perpensis, et assiduis, fervidisque ad Deum precibus effusis, minime cunctandum Nobis esse censuimus supremo Nostro judicio Immaculatam ipsius Virginis Conceptionem sancire, definire, atque ita pietissimis catholici orbis desideriis, Nostræque in ipsam sanctissimam Virginem pietati satisfacere, ac simul in Ipsa Unigenitum Filium suum Dominum Nostrum Jesum Christum magis atque magis honorificare, cum in Filium redundet quicquid honoris et laudis in Matrem impenditur.

Quare postquam nunquam intermisimus in humilitate et jejunio privatas Nostras et publicas Ecclesiæ preces Deo Patri per Filium Ejus offerre, ut Spiritus Sancti virtute mentem Nostram dirigere, et confirmare dignaretur, implorato universæ cœlestis Curiae præsidio, et advocato cum gemitibus Paraclito Spiritu, eoque sic adspirante, ad honorem Sanctæ et Individuæ Trinitatis, ad decus et ornamentum Virginis Deiparæ, ad exaltationem Fidei catholicæ, et Christianæ Religionis augmentum, auctoritate Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, beatorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, ac Nostra declaramus, pronunciamus et definimus, doctrinam, quæ tenet, Beatissimam Virginem Mariam in primo instanti suæ Conceptionis fuisse singulari omnipotentis Dei gratia et privilegio, intuitu meritorum Christi Jesu Salvatoris humani generis, ab omni originalis culpæ labe præservatam immunem, esse a Deo revelatam, atque idcirco ab omnibus fidelibus firmiter constanterque

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of the Church, the singular agreement of Catholic Prelates and Faithful, and the signal acts and constitutions of Our predecessors wonderfully illustrate and proclaim; having most diligently weighed all things, and poured forth to God assiduous and fervent prayers, We resolved that We should no longer delay to sanction and define, by Our supreme authority, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and thus to satisfy the most pious desires of the Catholic world and Our own piety towards the Most Holy Virgin, and, at the same time, to honor more and more the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, since whatever honor and praise is given to the Mother redounds to the Son.

Wherefore, after We had unceasingly, in humility and fasting, offered Our own prayers and the public prayers of the Church to God the Father, through his Son, that He would deign to direct and confirm our mind by the power of the Holy Ghost, and implored the aid of the entire heavenly host, and invoked the Paraclete with sighs, and He thus inspiring, to the honor of the Holy and undivided Trinity, to the glory and ornament of the Virgin Mother of God, to the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and the increase of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the

credendam. Quapropter si qui secus ac a Nobis definitum est, quod Deus avertat, præsumpserint corde sentire, ii noverint, porro sciant, se proprio iudicio condemnatos, naufragium circa fidem passos esse, et ab unitate Ecclesiæ defecisse, ac præterea facto ipso suo semet pœnis a jure statutis subicere si quod corde sentiunt, verbo aut scripto, vel alio quovis externo modo significare ausi fuerint.

Repletum quidem est gaudio os Nostrum et lingua Nostra exultatione, atque humilimas maximasque Christo Jesu Domino Nostro agimus et semper agemus gratias, quod singulari suo beneficio nobis licet immerentibus concesserit hunc honorem atque hanc gloriam et laudem sanctissimæ suæ Matri offerre et decernere. Certissima vero spe et omni prorsus fiducia nitimur fore, ut ipsa Beatissima Virgo, quæ tota pulchra et Immaculata venenosum crudelissimi serpentis caput contrivit, et salutem attulit mundo, quæque Prophetarum, Apostolorumque præconium, et honor Martyrum, omniumque Sanctorum lætitia et corona, quæque tutissimum cunctorum periclitantium perfugium, et fidissima auxiliatrix, ac totius terrarum orbis potentissima apud Unigenitum Filium suum mediatrix, et conciliatrix, ac præclarissimum Ecclesiæ sanctæ decus et ornamentum, firmissimumque præsidium cunctas semper interemit hæreses, et fideles populos, gentesque maximis omnis generis calamitatibus eripuit, ac Nos ipsos a tot ingruentibus periculis liberavit; velit validissimo suo patrosinio efficere ut sancta Mater Catholica Ecclesia cunctis amotis difficultatibus, cunctisque profligatis erroribus ubicumque gentium, ubicumque locorum quotidie magis vigeat,

faithful. Wherefore, if any shall dare—which God forbid—to think otherwise than as it has been defined by Us, they should know and understand that they are condemned by their own judgment, that they have suffered shipwreck of the faith, and have revolted from the unity of the Church; and besides, by their own act they subject themselves to the penalties justly established, if what they think they should dare to signify by word, writing, or any other outward means.

Our mouth is filled with joy, and Our tongue with exultation, and We return, and shall ever return, the most humble and the greatest thanks to Jesus Christ our Lord, because through his singular beneficence He has granted to Us, though unworthy, to offer and decree this honor, glory, and praise, to His Most Holy Mother; but We rest in the most certain hope and confidence that this Most Blessed Virgin, who, all fair and immaculate, has bruised the poisonous head of the most malignant Serpent, and brought salvation to the world, who is the praise of the Prophets and the Apostles, the honor of the Martyrs, and the crown and joy of all the Saints—who is the safest refuge and most faithful helper of all who are in danger, and the most powerful mediatrix and conciliatrix with the only-begotten Son of the whole world, and the most illustrious glory and ornament, and most firm guardian of the Holy Church, who has destroyed all heresies, and snatched from the greatest calamities of all kinds the faithful peoples and nations, and delivered Us from so many threatening dangers, will effect by her most powerful patronage that, all difficulties being removed, and all errors dissipated, Our Holy Mother the Catholic Church may flourish daily more and more throughout all nations and

floreat ac regnet a mari usque ad mare et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum, omnique pace, tranquillitate, ac libertate fruatur, ut rei veniam ægri, medelam, pusilli corde robur, afflicti consolationem, periclitantes adjutorium obtineant, et omnes errantes discussa mentis caligine ad veritatis ac justitiæ semitam redeant, ac fiat unum ovile, et unus pastor.

Audiant hæc Nostra verba omnes Nobis carissimi Catholicæ Ecclesiæ filii, et ardentiori usque pietatis, religionis, et amoris studio pergant colere, invocare, exorare, beatissimam Dei Genitricem Virginem Mariam sine labe originali conceptam, atque ad hanc dulcissimam misericordiæ et gratiæ Matrem in omnibus periculis, angustiis, necessitatibus, rebusque dubiis ac trepidis cum omni fiducia confugiant. Nihil enim timendum, nihilque desperandum Ipsa duce, Ipsa auspice, Ipsa propitia, Ipsa protegente, quæ maternum sane in nos gerens animum, nostræque salutis negotia tractans de universo humano genere est sollicita, et cœli, terræque Regina a Domino constituta, ac super omnes Angelorum choros Sanctorumque ordines exaltata adstans a dextris Unigeniti Filii Sui Domini Nostri Jesu Christi maternis suis precibus validissime impetrat, et quod quærit invenit, ac frustrari non potest.

Denique ut ad universalis Ecclesiæ notitiam hæc Nostra de Immaculata Conceptione Beatissimæ Virginis Mariæ definitio deducatur, has Apostolicas Nostras Litteras, ad perpetuam rei memoriam extare volumus; mandantes ut harum transumptis, seu exemplis etiam impressis, manu alicujus Notarii publici subscriptis, et sigillo personæ in Ecclesiastica dignitate constitutæ munitis eadam prorsus

countries, and may reign from sea to sea to the ends of the earth, and may enjoy all peace, tranquillity, and liberty; that the sinner may obtain pardon, the sick healing, the weak strength of heart, the afflicted consolation, and that all who are in error, their spiritual blindness being dissipated, may return to the path of truth and justice, and may become one flock and one shepherd.

Let all the children of the Catholic Church most dear to Us hear these Our Words, and, with a more ardent zeal of piety, religion, and love, proceed to worship, invoke, and pray to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, conceived without original sin, and let them fly with entire confidence to this most sweet Mother of Mercy and Grace in all dangers, difficulties, doubts, and fears. For nothing is to be feared, and nothing is to be despaired of under her guidance, under her auspices, under her favor, under her protection, who, bearing towards us a maternal affection, and taking up the business of our salvation, is solicitous for the whole human race, and, appointed by God the Queen of Heaven and Earth, and exalted above all the choirs of Angels, and orders of Saints, standing at the right hand of the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ Our Lord, intercedes most powerfully, and obtains what she asks, and cannot be frustrated.

Finally, in order that this Our definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary may be brought to the knowledge of the Universal Church, We will these Letters Apostolic to stand for a perpetual remembrance of the thing, commanding that to transcripts or printed copies, subscribed by the hand of some notary public, and authenticated by the seal of a person of ecclesiastical rank, appointed for the purpose, the same faith

fides ab omnibus adhibeatur, quæ ipsis præsentibus adhiberetur, si forent exhibitæ, vel ostensæ.

Nulli ergo hominum liceat paginam hanc Nostræ declarationis, pronuntiationis, ac definitionis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario adversari et contraire. Si quis autem hoc attentare præsumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei ac beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum ejus se noverit incursurum.

Datum Romæ apud Sanctum Petrum Anno Incarnationis Dominicæ Millesimo octingentesimo quinquagesimo quarto, VI Idus Decembris Anno MDCCCLIV, Pontificatus Nostri Anno Nono.

PIUS PP. IX.

shall be paid which would be paid to those presents if they were exhibited or shown.

Let no man interfere with this Our declaration, pronouncement, and definition, or oppose and contradict it with presumptuous rashness. If any should presume to assail it, let him know that he will incur the indignation of the Omnipotent God and of His Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord, 1854, the sixth of the Ides of December, in the ninth year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS IX, POPE.

PASTORAL LETTER OF CARDINAL WISEMAN

ON THE

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

NICHOLAS, BY THE DIVINE MERCY, OF THE HOLY
ROMAN CHURCH OF THE TITLE OF ST. PUDENTIANA,
CARDINAL PRIEST, AND ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMIN-
STER.

*To our Dearly Beloved Brethren and Children in Christ,
the Clergy Secular and Regular, and the Faithful of the
said Diocese—Health and Benediction in the Lord.*

ALTHOUGH in the course of a few days, we hope to begin our journey homeward, we cannot resist the earnest desire which we feel, to make you partakers in the consolation and joy which we have experienced in the few last days. Neither can we consider it becoming, dearly beloved in Christ, that you should have to receive, through the ordinary channels of public information, tidings of events most interesting to every Catholic heart, or that you should learn the important decision pronounced by the Sovereign Pontiff from any one but your own pastor, who had announced to you his intention of assisting at it, and who had the happiness and honor of hearing it from the very lips of the Holy Father.

You are aware, then, dearly beloved, that upon his paternal invitation, we hastened hither, to join our most eminent and illustrious brethren, in the great cause of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mother of God, which having been already examined and discussed with great maturity, was about to receive its final examination and decision. During the late pontificate of Gregory XVI, many petitions had been made from all parts of the Church, for the dogmatical definition of this doctrine. This spontaneous movement—which far from diminishing increased, in a manner—impelled the reigning Pontiff, during his exile at Gaeta, to issue an encyclical to all the Bishops of the Church, dated February 2, 1849, desiring them to inform him as soon as possible of their own sentiments, and those of their clergy and people, on this important subject. Indeed, previous to this, he had appointed a council of twenty theologians, secular and regular, to sift the question thoroughly, and report on all the authorities which could be collected on it from ancient writers, liturgies, and other ecclesiastical documents. This was connected with a particular council, composed of twenty-two Cardinals, distinguished for their piety and learning.

On his return from exile, the Holy Father named another board of theologians, selected from the first, with the title of a "special commission," under the presidency of the late lamented Cardinal Fornari, before whom it held frequent sittings in the course of 1852 and 1853. They unanimously reported that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception could be dogmatically defined, and that it was seasonable to define it. This decision was approved by the particular congregation of Cardinals.

Answers to the encyclical letter soon poured in from

every quarter. Six hundred and two letters were received from Bishops in every part of the globe. Every one, without exception, expressed his firm belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and affectionate devotion towards this mystery of God's love and power. Four only expressed any objection to its being dogmatically defined; and fifty-two, while satisfied as to the sufficiency of theological reasons for such a definition, and themselves prepared for it, hesitate as to its opportuneness at the present moment. Still all, whatever their own opinions may be, profess themselves most ready to accept and obey whatever may emanate from the Holy See. All these letters, with many others, from sovereigns, heads of religious orders, municipal corporations, and other associations, humbly petitioning for the declaration of this dogma, have been printed, together with the various treatises, in nine octavo volumes, a copy of which was presented to each Bishop on his arrival at Rome.

Such were the preliminary measures adopted by the Holy Pontiff, to ascertain the sense of the living Church, no less "the pillar and ground of truth" than that of the first centuries, upon the doctrine plainly held, on the subject of the Immaculate Conception. But to these must be added, the prayers, communions, and holy sacrifices, offered up by the clergy and faithful of every country, in obedience to the commands and earnest wishes of our common Father, especially in the Jubilee previous to the present. Neither must we forget his own earnest prayers, which he assures us have been unceasingly poured forth, accompanied by fasting and humiliation, for the grace of God, and the light of the Holy Ghost, to direct him aright in this important decision.

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Having at length determined that the time was come for dogmatically pronouncing on the subject, and desirous of giving all due publicity and solemnity to this greatest exercise of the sublime power conferred by our Lord on the prince of the Apostles and their successors, the Sovereign Pontiff invited to Rome a certain number of Prelates from each country to represent its hierarchy. At the same time, he expressed his readiness to see as many others as could conveniently come, to attend the noble function appointed for the 8th of December.

Far beyond all anticipation were the results of this general intimation of the Holy Father's will. Though we arrived in Rome as early as the fourth of November, being called to attend at the Consistory, expected that week, still we found numbers of our eminent and illustrious colleagues already arrived; and every day swelled the venerable company of Prelates, many of whom represented most distinguished sees.¹ Who could behold without emotion

¹ The following are the countries from which the Prelates at Rome on the above day came to celebrate that great event. We see with pride, that (outside of Italy) no country, except France, sent a larger number of Prelates than the United States:

City of Rome	60	Bavaria	2
Pontifical States	40	Canada	1
France	21	Holland	2
Naples	11	Parma	1
United States	6	China	1
Ireland	6	Portugal	1
England	6	Modena	1
Tuscany	5	Archipelago (Is.)	1
Lombardy	5	Servia	1
Sardinia	5	Hesse-Darmstadt	1
Belgium	4	Hungary	1
Austria	2	New South Wales	2
Prussia	3	Nova Scotia	1
Spain	3		

the Archbishops of such churches as Milan, Toledo, Ravenna, Compostella, Naples, Rheims, Paris, Vienna, Armagh, Lyons, Strigonium, Turin, Munich, Aix, Dublin, Mechlin, Lisbon, Tuam, Florence, Pisa, or though of more recent creation those of New-York or Baltimore,—united together in the same faith, as on the same spot, congregated around the centre of unity, in perfect communion, charity, and peace? Nor was it unobserved, that there were present the first Archbishops of four new hierarchies, established by the present Pontiff, those of Westminster, Sydney, Halifax, and Utrecht. To enumerate even a few of the Bishops is beyond our limits.

It was impossible to behold many of these Prelates without emotion: many venerable for their age, and the long and faithful services they had rendered to the Church; some revered for their persecution and sufferings, even to exile, which they have heroically endured for Christ's truth; not a few whose countenances presented to the beholder the type of holiness which shines in their lives, so as to be like breathing pictures of eminent saints, but present evidences of the Church's mark of sanctity; and others, whose noble features and bearing, or whose mild and amiable countenances presented varied forms of the episcopal character—such was the truly grand Assemblage of Bishops, amidst which we have found ourselves standing, to our own edification, instruction, and humiliation. On four different days did this truly ecclesiastical assembly meet under the presidency of three Cardinals distinguished for piety, theological learning, and experience,—Brunelli, Caterini and Santucci,—and attended upon by a choice assembly of divines, secular and regular. The Bull prepared for its last revision had been communicated to them,

and every portion of it frankly and acutely discussed. Here was indeed seen the importance, or rather the necessity of a common ecclesiastical language as the organ of religious unity. The Bishops assembled in Rome represented fourteen different languages, as used by them in their communications with their own flocks; yet here a common tongue united them, and proved that they belonged to the Church which belongs indeed to the whole earth, but is still of one lip and one speech.

After these deliberations, which regarded the form, and not the substance, of the already decided definition, the Pope, in secret consistory, conferred with the sacred college of his Cardinals, the natural counsellors of the Apostolic See.

All was now ready, and the great day approached, a day for ever memorable in the Church's annals; the day in which the greatest prerogative of holiness ever conferred on creature—exemption from the stain of original sin—was to be dogmatically declared, as it had been firmly believed, to belong to the purest of beings, after Him who chose and fitted her to be His Mother.

You will of course understand, dearly beloved in Christ, that the Church pretends to no new revelations; but claims the unfailing assistance of the Holy Spirit to guide her into all truth and the teaching in her of her Divine founder, to the consummation of the world; and therefore the perfect assurance that whatever she is found to be at any time universally teaching, and what the Vicar of Jesus Christ pronounces to be her doctrine, has been that of the Catholic Church from the beginning, and consequently a portion of that deposit of faith, and a part of that revealed truth, which was intrusted to her by the

Author and Finisher of her Faith. It was not therefore to announce to the world any new discovery, nor to demonstrate by arguments a particular theory, that this venerable assembly was convened in the magnificent basilica of St. Peter, on the memorable 8th of December just elapsed. It was, as successor to him whose ashes and under the shadow of whose chair he stands, to pronounce a decree of unfailing certainty, that the immunity of the ever blessed Virgin Mother of God, the eternal Word incarnate, and the spotless Lamb, had been a doctrine revealed from the beginning, and if hitherto only received in implicit faith, henceforth, by virtue of his decree, to be believed by all with explicit faith—that is, as a distinct and separate dogma, no longer involved in the general belief of what the Church teaches.

The early hour of eight in the morning was appointed for the commencement of the function; but even before this we had the consolation of securing to our own country a future blessing, connected with the memory of this glorious day, by conferring all the orders on future missionaries, including four Priests, in the chapel of the English College, so dear to our affections.

It was scarcely fully day when the unexampled assembly of prelates, about to take part in the solemnities of the day, met in the chapel of the Vatican Palace, known as the Sistine Chapel, and it was soon crowned by the arrival of the Sovereign Pontiff, surrounded by his court. The Litany of the Saints having been intoned, as on penitential occasions, the procession set forth, and presented one of the noblest ecclesiastical spectacles ever witnessed even in St. Peter's. One hundred and fifty-two Bishops, in silver copes and white mitres, and fifty-one mitred Cardi-

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nals, in the embroidered vestments of their respective orders, as Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, immediately preceded the Holy Father; and their number was increased, to the delight of all, when, later in the function, two most venerable members of the Sacred College, whom age and infirmity had long kept from attending at public ceremonies, took their places; and the learned Bishop Bouvier was carried into the ranks of his brethren, suffering from a serious illness which had attacked him on his journey.

We will not attempt to describe the magnificent celebration of the holy sacrifice which followed. All the special grandeur which accompanies it, when offered up by the Sovereign Pontiff in the greatest of churches, was this year immensely enhanced by the additional attendance of so many illustrious Prelates. No regal or imperial ceremony could be more august than the procession of these two hundred Prelates, as each singly approached to do homage to the head of the Church, before the Mass commenced. The office of Tierce was first chanted; the Epistle and Gospel were, according to custom, sung in Greek as well as in Latin; and it was a quarter past eleven when the last note of the evangelist sounded over the shrine of St. Peter, and a silence took place, such as is difficult to imagine in a crowd of thirty or forty thousand persons, who filled the church. Every breath was held, every nerve was strained, and attention of eye and ear was keenly directed towards the Pontifical throne. The venerable Dean of the Sacred College, Cardinal Macchi, in his eighty-sixth year, but still in enjoyment of full mental vigor, approached its steps, accompanied by a Greek and an Armenian Bishop, as supporters and wit-

nesses of his petition, together with twelve senior Archbishops of the Western church, who were assistants at the throne, and the officers of the household, who are official witnesses of such important transactions. Kneeling there, the eminent postulant, in the name of his brethren and the whole Catholic episcopate, supplicated the Holy Father to pronounce his dogmatical definition of the Immaculate Conception of the ever glorious Virgin Mary.

The Pontiff assented; but called on all to join him in invoking the light and grace of the Holy Spirit at such a solemn moment. He knelt, and in his clear, sonorous, and most musical voice, intoned the hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*. The choir sung the verse, and, according to practice, was going to continue, when the entire congregation, not only of assembled Bishops and clergy, but of crowded people, spontaneously and simultaneously, and with admirable harmony, took up the song, and with a voice loud as the sound of many waters, but one as the expression of a single heart, filled the whole basilica with such a strain as perhaps never before struck against its golden vaults. It was grand beyond conception; it was sublime; and came nearer the realization of what St. John heard of heavenly music, whose armies sing with one accord, than anything which we or others ever before listened to; and it was repeated at each alternate verse, with as perfect regularity as if the whole multitude had been trained to answer the choir.

But still more sublime than this glorious strain was the silence that ensued. Standing at his throne, the Holy Father commenced the reading of the solemn decree, by which, as superior Pastor and visible head of the universal Church, as successor of the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul,

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and as Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, he authoritatively and dogmatically pronounced that the immunity from original sin, or in other words, the Immaculate Conception of the ever blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is a revealed doctrine of the Catholic Church.

He had not, however, proceeded far, before his tears and sobs interrupted his speech; and it was only by an effort, which evidently cost him great exertion, that he could make his words struggle through the tide of his emotions, and rise audible above the flood of his overpowering feelings. He succeeded, indeed, so that we had the happiness of hearing every word and syllable of his most memorable decree; but that flood of tender devotion drew after itself corresponding sentiments from the souls of others, so that scarcely a dry eye was to be seen among those who witnessed this touching scene. The cannon's voice gave the signal of the happy accomplishment of so many fervent desires, to the whole city; and the prolonged peals of gladness from the olden towers of basilicas, and the belfries of modern churches, represented the acclaim of the earlier and later periods of unchangeable Catholicity.

The Cardinal Dean returned before the throne to return thanks, and, accompanied by the proper official personages, to request that the official deed should be drawn up of the proceeding, and the Bull issued, containing the decree just pronounced. The Mass then continued; and at the *Te Deum* which closed it, the people joined in, with the same overwhelming melody as they had introduced into the invocation of the Holy Ghost.

It is not necessary that we should enter into details concerning the less religious celebration of the day. Suf-

fice it to say, that every mark of sincere joy was exhibited by the devout Roman people, that the evening was enlivened by the general illumination of the city, particularly of the Vatican and the Capitol—the two great centres of sacred and classical Rome. But one feature of this glorious day could not fail to strike the minds of all who enjoyed it. For several days previously, and down to the very evening before, a gloomy atmosphere, and on the vigil itself torrents of rain, such as are rare even in Italy, poured down unceasingly; and the day following the function, the same unfavorable weather returned—only during the day itself the sky was serene and beautiful, the sun shone forth in splendor, the crowds of citizens and strangers could move freely and cheerfully through the streets to the Vatican basilica in the morning, and again in the evening, to fill its interior, and assist at the sublime office and function there performed, and in the evening to crowd round its exterior, and gaze with admiration at the huge structure traced in lines of light against the deep azure sky, and then breaking into a mass of fire, as though a new and brilliant constellation had sprung from earth to heaven.

Such, dearly beloved in Christ, was the great festival which has drawn from the very ends of the earth so many men distinguished for their virtues, their learning, their dignity, and many other rare gifts, anxious to partake in its blessings and its joys, and to mark their lives with an epoch which after ages will record brightly in the Church's annals. If, last and least among them, and disclaiming all personal title to be enrolled in such a list, your Pastor has undeservingly taken his place in the midst of these, let any honor devolve upon the See and the flock, whose

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homage he laid at the feet of the supreme Pontiff, as that of an humble tributary, and a docile and loving family, when he exercised the highest privilege confided to the Apostolic chair, that of pronouncing on matters of faith. And be theirs also the ample blessings which the Father of the Faithful poured out upon the congregated pastors, and the sheep of Christ committed to their respective cares.

Did we not fear to weary you, we would proceed further to describe the great festivity of the Sunday following, the 10th of this month. This was the solemn consecration of the Ostian basilica, dedicated to St. Paul, and now rebuilt, after having been consumed by fire in the year 1823. In this function it pleased his Holiness, on account of the immensity of the building, to appoint six Cardinal Archbishops in different countries, to assist him in consecrating the great church of the Apostle of Nations. We had thus the unmerited honor and gratification of taking an active part in this magnificent ceremony, which was assisted by the same concourse of Prelates as attended at St. Peter's on the preceding Friday. Their names will all be engraven on marble tablets, placed on the walls of the re-consecrated basilica.

Rejoice, then, dearly beloved, again we say—rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord, who has so graciously bestowed on His Church so signal a blessing, whereby the piety of her children has been wonderfully excited, and their love for their Mother in heaven greatly increased. Rejoice, that to her fresh glory has been given, and a new crown, the brightest that she can wear; that we may hope for new favors and more abundant graces from her affectionate and powerful intercession. Rejoice, that through this glo-

rious event, the unity of the Church, the peace and love that reign among its pastors, their docility to their Head, their attachment to the See of Peter, and the piety and learning of so many of them have been most consolingly exhibited.

And though absent in body, yet in spirit present with you, we rejoice with you, and pray to God that from this spiritual joy He will raise more solid graces—fruit of the blessing which the Holy Father, through our hands, sends down upon you.

Given out of the Flaminian Gate of Rome, and appointed to be read in all the churches and chapels of our Diocese, on the Sunday following its publication, this fourteenth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four.

N. CARD. WISEMAN.

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FESTIVAL
OF THE
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
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BLESSED VIRGIN.

A GREAT event, which all future ages will bless, took place in the basilica of the Vatican, on the morning of the 8th of December, 1854. The Sovereign Pontiff of the Catholic Church, in accordance with the ardent desire of the bishops and the faithful committed to their care, has, at length, defined, as a dogma of faith, what has for centuries been the pious and universal belief regarding the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Mary. The morning of this day, although on the preceding evening the rain fell heavily, was as bright and serene as if it were a beautiful day in spring; and Rome, which, in consequence of its boundless devotion to Mary, awaited with more anxiety than any other city the oracle of the Vatican, was in motion from the first dawn of day, and on all sides manifested its joy. The citizens of all classes, united with an extraordinary concourse of strangers, assembled from all parts, directing their course to the Vatican. All were eager to assist at the solemn ceremony, and hear what

they were thenceforth firmly to believe regarding the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, whom the fathers of the Church call a prodigy of innocence, purity, and honor, replenished with grace and glory, and whom the pious faithful invoke in the appropriate prayers of the Church, as full of grace, Queen of Angels and men, dispenser of the gifts of Heaven, and the hope and succor of all in the midst of the storms and commotions of life.

About half-past eight, all the Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops, arrayed in their pontifical robes, assembled, with the various colleges of the prelature, at the Sistine chapel.

When the Sovereign Pontiff, on his arrival in the chapel, was invested with the pontifical robes, the procession put itself in motion to descend by the Scala Regia into the basilica of the Vatican. In the first rank walked the apostolic preacher and the confessor of the pontifical household, followed by the procurators-general of the religious orders, the *bussolanti*, chaplains in ordinary, the pontifical footmen, and the assistant chamberlains; then came the private clerks and the private honorary chaplains, the consistorial councillors, the chamberlains of honor, and the pontifical chanters. Next came the voters of the *segnatura*, the clerks of the chamber, the auditors of the Rota, and the master of the holy hospital; then came the cross, borne by an auditor of the Rota, in the midst of seven prelates carrying chandeliers with lighted tapers; behind the cross walked the Latin sub-deacon and the Greek deacon and sub-deacon, the penitentiaries of St. Peter, the bishops, archbishops, and cardinals. Next came His Holiness, under the canopy, followed by the Roman magistracy, after whom came the vice-chamber-

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lain of the holy Church, the two cardinal deacon's assistants, and the cardinal deacon, who were to assist the Pontiff in the celebration of the solemn mass. Afterwards came the dean of the Rota, the auditor of the chamber, the major-domo, the master of the chamber, the regent of the chancellerie, and the procurator-apostolic.

During the procession the Litanies of the Saints were chanted, terminating the moment the Pontiff entered the basilica. After the recitation of the prescribed prayers, the Holy Father went to adore the most holy sacrament—thence, accompanied by the procession, to the papal altar, and from his throne, placed at the epistle side, he received the homage of the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and penitenciaries. All the archbishops present at the ceremony, and who were not yet assistants at the throne, were declared such by the express wish of the Sovereign Pontiff, and from that moment the twelve oldest archbishops placed themselves round the throne during the remainder of the ceremony. After the intoning of the office of tierce the Holy Father was robed in his vestments for the pontifical mass, having for assistant bishops his Eminence Cardinal Mattei, sub-dean of the Sacred College; for deacon, serving at the mass, his Eminence Cardinal Antonelli, and for sub-deacon, Mgr. Serafini, auditor of the Rota.

After the gospel chanted successively in Latin and Greek, his Eminence Cardinal Macchi, in quality of dean of the Sacred College, accompanied by the deans, archbishops, and bishops present at the ceremony, and also by the archbishops of the Greek rite, and the archbishops of the Armenian rite, presented himself at the foot of the throne, and addressed these words in Latin to the Sovereign Pontiff:

"The Catholic Church, most Holy Father, has ardently desired and long earnestly entreated, that your supreme and infallible judgment may give a decision on the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God, which will be to her an increase of praise, glory, and veneration. In the name of the Sacred College of Cardinals, of the bishops of the Catholic world, and of all the faithful, we request humbly and earnestly that the universal wishes of the Church be fulfilled in this solemnity of the Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin.

"Therefore, whilst the august sacrifice of the altar is offered up in this temple, consecrated to the Prince of the Apostles, and in the midst of this solemn assemblage of the Sacred College, and of the bishops and the people, deign, most Holy Father, to raise your apostolic voice, and pronounce that dogmatic decree of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which will be a cause of joy in heaven and of the most lively jubilation on earth."

To these words the Pontiff replied that he received with pleasure the prayer of the Sacred College, the episcopacy, and the faithful, but that, before granting it, it was necessary to invoke the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Immediately the *Veni Creator* was intoned, and the extemporized chant of this hymn was executed, not only by the chanters of the Papal chapel, but by all the people assembled. Animated with the most ardent faith and love towards Her whom all nations call blessed, each implored the light of heaven on the Sovereign Pontiff, prepared to deliver from the Chair of Peter a decision which was about to make instantly bow with respect the forehead of every faithful Catholic throughout the earth, whatever the diversities of language, legislation, manners, or climates.

After the chanting of the hymn, His Holiness, in the midst of a profound silence, read the decree in a loud voice, and with so much emotion that the reading was frequently suspended for some moments; and every one who assisted at this great act partook of the emotion of the Pontiff. In this decree the Sovereign Pontiff has solemnly defined,

THAT IT IS A DOGMA OF FAITH THAT THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, FROM THE FIRST INSTANT OF HER CONCEPTION, BY A PRIVILEGE AND SPECIAL GRACE OF GOD, IN VIRTUE OF THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST, SAVIOUR OF MANKIND, WAS PRESERVED INTACT FROM EVERY STAIN OF ORIGINAL SIN.

Such is the solemn dogmatic definition for which the holy Apostolic See had been so urgently implored, and had consulted the episcopacy of the whole Catholic world—the solemn definition which so many bishops assembled to hear with joy, and will announce to their people on returning to their respective dioceses.

After the reading of the decree the Cardinal Dean returned to the foot of the throne, thanking the Holy Father for having, by his apostolic authority, defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and praying him to publish the Bull relative to this dogmatic definition. The apostolic protonotaries then presented themselves, and the promoter of the faith, Mgr. Frattini, in quality of consistorial counsellor, urged that the preparation of the *process verbal* of this solemn act should be proceeded with. His Holiness gave his consent, and the dean of the protonotaries announced that it should be done. Meanwhile the cannon of the Castle of St. Angelo proclaimed to all the city the promulgation of the decree. The bells in every tower in Rome pealed joyously, and the inhabitants, to

manifest their happiness, ornamented their windows and balconies with tapestry and hangings.

After the mass, at which, in reserved tribunes, assisted her Royal Highness the Princess of Saxony, the *corps diplomatique*, and the officers of the French army of occupation, and in a place prepared for their accommodation the special counsellors extraordinary of the Immaculate Conception, with, finally, a multitude such as for many years had not been seen in this the greatest temple in the universe, the *Te Deum* was chanted in thanksgiving. The Sovereign Pontiff, accompanied by the voices of the cardinals, archbishops and bishops, chanted a verse, to which the people replied by the following one. The emotion was universal.

The Holy Father, borne on the *sedes gestatoria*, afterwards repaired in procession to the chapel of Sixtus IV, commonly called the chapel of the Most Reverend Chapter of the Vatican, and there solemnly crowned the image of the Virgin representing the Conception, the crown being of gold enriched with precious stones. His Holiness afterwards proceeded to the chapel called Della Pietà to unrobe, and there received the thanks of the Very Rev. Father General of the Friars Minors Observatores, and of the reformed Friars Minors, for having defined on the question of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, the doctrine which the Franciscan Fathers had always taught. His Holiness then returned to his own apartments.

On the evening of the day of this glorious solemnity Rome presented a magnificent spectacle. Every house, from the palace of the great lord to the humblest abode of the poor, shone with light. The municipality had caused the dome of St. Peter's and the Palace of the

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Capitol to be illuminated, where two orchestras also performed, to a late hour, select pieces of music to applauding crowds. Through the care of the magistrates there was also, in honor of the Immaculate Conception, in the hall of the Conservatore, an academic reunion, in which his Eminence Cardinal Wiseman pronounced an eloquent discourse in presence of a numerous concourse of cardinals, bishops, prelates, and other distinguished personages.

Rome on this solemn day has shown in the most brilliant manner its devotion for the Most Holy Virgin, and the bishops, in returning to their dioceses and announcing to their flocks what they have heard from the oracle of the Vatican, will also be able to bear witness to the honor rendered to the Blessed Virgin in the capital of the Catholic world, and whether Rome has on this occasion been behind Ephesus. The history of the Church will rank amongst the most memorable of its days, the 8th of December, 1854, on which the august Mother of the Saviour of the World received a new triumph from the chair of truth.

FROM THE UNIVERS.

On the 21st of June, in the year 431, the whole city of Ephesus was in commotion and feverish with anxiety. Upwards of two hundred Bishops, presided over by the great St. Cyril of Alexandria, Legate of the Sovereign Roman Pontiff, were assembled in the Church of St. Mary. The object of that solemn assembly was to examine and to condemn the errors taught by Nestorius, and in particular his belief on the subject of the maternity of the Holy Virgin, to whom he refused the title of Mother of God. That

error wounded the hearts of the Christian people to whom the title denied was particularly dear, and therefore the inhabitants of Ephesus collected around that episcopal assembly, impatiently awaiting the result of its deliberations. The session lasted from the morning until sunset; but nothing could weary the pious anxiety of the Faithful. Some in the sanctuary of their families prayed with fervor that the heresiarch Nestorius might be condemned, and that Mary might be preserved in the title of the Mother of God; others surrounded the church in which the Bishops were assembled awaiting the rising of the assembly to know the sooner what they should have pronounced.

At last the meeting concluded, and when the people knew that the council had decided that Mary must be called Mother of God, and pronounced anathema against whoever would think otherwise, all the people sent forth an immense acclamation of joy. That was a spectacle full of emotion; sadness gave place immediately to the most lively joy. The whole city was spontaneously illuminated and embellished with its holiday ornaments; fires were kindled in the public squares, and the Bishops were re-conducted to their residences by a multitude intoxicated with happiness, who carried lighted torches and scattered perfumes and flowers in the steps of the Fathers of the council. This was the prodigy which the faith of the Christian people and their love for Mary produced in a great city in the fifth century.

Rome has just witnessed a spectacle which yields in nothing to that which we have just recalled. The nineteenth century has produced a festival which does no less honor to the faith of its children and their devotion for

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the Queen of Heaven. The number of Bishops assembled in Rome on the 8th of December, 1854, was the same as at Ephesus. The object of their meeting was also the proclamation of one of the most glorious privileges of Mary, of that which is the foundation of all the others, and without which the title even of Mother of God might not, without doubt, have been conferred on her by the Most High. How could God have chosen for His Mother a creature who might have been for a single instant the subject of Satan and a daughter of sin? Not less dear to the Christian people is the title, the possession of which has just been assured to the Queen of Virgins, and which has been from the very cradle of the Church, the object of universal belief, and every age had sighed for the oracle which would proclaim it the irrefragable truth. As at Ephesus, all the Christian people were in expectation and anxiety demanding of God that its wishes might be heard, and that Mary might be proclaimed without spot or stain, immaculate in her conception. But, more happy than the Pope Saint Celestine, Pius IX could preside himself over the assembly of his brethren the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops of all the earth. He had not to strike one of his brethren in the Episcopacy, and the haughty Nestorius had no emulator in the august assembly of Rome. The glory of Mary had not to be defended against any individual, and in this brilliant victory gained by the Queen of Heaven, impiety only has been vanquished; Hell alone has trembled; the entire Church has applauded, and the dogma proclaimed on the 8th of December, in the basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, by the Vicar of Jesus Christ, was proclaimed beforehand by the voice of all the Bishops, and by the ardent prayers

and supplications of all the faithful children of the universal Church.

Let us describe, then, as far as the thing is possible, a festival that so many saints have desired, that so many ages have aspired to behold, that so many Pontiffs have desired to give to the Church, and that the Lord in His infinite Mercy had willed to reserve to our unhappy times as their hope and their resource. The festival of Rome is the festival of the entire world; it is presided over by the august head of the Church. Two hundred Bishops come from all corners of the world, from the far-off regions of China, the deserts of America, from the most distant islands of the ocean, to the court of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and encircle him as by a brilliant crown; two or three hundred Prelates, of all ranks, of all titles, of all costumes, serve as his retinue of honor. Oh, how beautiful it is to see that magnificent, that incomparable procession descending the grand stairs of Constantine! What variety, what richness in the sacred ornaments! Six Cardinal Bishops, thirty-seven Cardinal Priests, eleven Cardinal Deacons, a Patriarch of the East, forty-two Archbishops, a hundred Bishops of all rites, of every country in the world, marching in two majestic files, invested in cope and mitre. The Vicar of Jesus Christ followed them in all the splendor of his sacred Pontifical ornaments! The chant of the Litany commenced in the Sistine Chapel, and was continued through the royal hall, the stairs of Constantine, the peristyle, and the grand nave of the basilica. An immense concourse crowded to see the procession of the Pastors of the Church, and to receive the benediction of its Supreme Chief, who advanced praying with pious recollection, a holy joy playing on his lips

and in his eyes. Arrived in front of the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, the procession halted, and, after adoring God concealed in the tabernacle, the Pope finished the chanting of the Litany by the consecrated prayer; then the retinue recommenced its procession towards the Altar of the Confession, all resplendent with tiaras and precious mitres, with the cross and candlesticks of gold, with reliquaries, flowers and lights. It passed before the ancient statue of the first Pope, of him who received from Jesus Christ himself the government of the holy Church, of Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, become the Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the head of the universal Church; and that first Pope whose head wore the triple crown, whose shoulders bore the cope of gold, and who held on his finger the Fisherman's ring, seemed to salute his 259th successor, Pope Pius IX, gloriously reigning, the heir of his authority and of his virtues. The College of the Holy Apostles found itself again, and recognized itself in the two hundred Bishops who followed their Supreme Pastor, and the Clergy, and the Faithful, who filled the immense basilica, are the faithful type of the primitive Church. It was thus that in Jerusalem the Apostles assembled together, under the presidency of Peter, and the Holy Ghost was in the midst of them.

When the Sovereign Pontiff was seated upon his throne, the Cardinals, the Archbishops, the Bishops, and the prelates went in turn to render obedience to him and kiss his sacred foot or his hand, on which sparkled the Pastoral ring. It was the entire Church which venerated her august Chief, he from whom flows all spiritual jurisdiction and authority, he who sits in the chair of Peter, and who feeds both Pastors and sheep. China sent him one of her

Vicars-Apostolic; America several of her Archbishops and Bishops; the isles lost in farthermost oceans had their representatives there. Europe deputed thither the greatest part of her Pastors. Rome counted there sixty Bishops, of whom thirty are Princes of the Church; the Pontifical States, France, Austria, Spain, the two Sicilies, Piedmont, Belgium, Bavaria, all the Catholic powers were there blended in the same respect and in the same love. Lutheran England, Evangelical Prussia, Calvinistic Holland sent the chiefs of their young Hierarchies thither. Empires, kingdoms, republics there gave each other the hand in unity; and when these two hundred Bishops had taken their seats, having behind them an infinite number of inferior Prelates, of Generals of Orders, of Priests, of Religious, and of Faithful, and at their head the Sovereign Roman Pontiff, could we not say that the Universal Church was present? What did it want? A Bishop of Russia. The entire world was there to celebrate the triumph of the Queen of Heaven. The empire of the Autocrat, of him who pretends *par excellence* to the title of "Orthodox," is the only one which has no Bishop in that assembly, gathered from the four corners of the world, and formed of all the Catholic rites. Let us hope that she of whom Scripture chants that she is strong and "terrible as an army in battle array," will remember this in the days of the great combats.

The chanting of the Tierce is terminated; the Obedience is finished; and, if we may presume to employ this term, the assembly has assumed that aspect that we admire in the old paintings and engravings in which the Council of Trent and the other great assizes of the Holy Catholic Church are represented, but with that additional

majesty and that grander character that the presence of the august and Supreme Pastor imprints upon it. The Holy Sacrifice is about to commence, and the High Priest of the Universal Law advances towards the altar to immolate the Adorable Victim. We do not wish to describe the beauty of the ceremonies, the harmonious melody of the chants consecrated by ages, and the rites so grand, so splendid, which invest the holy function celebrated by the Supreme Pontiff; this picture would carry us too far, and we must hasten to arrive at the solemn moment, to the reading of the Decree, in honor of which all this pomp is displayed, all these Bishops have come from afar, and which must assure to Mary the most glorious of her privileges, and the purest of her Mysteries.

The Gospel has been chanted in the two languages consecrated by the Holy Liturgy, and in the two rites prescribed for the Papal Mass. It is the moment so impatiently expected, the hour marked from all eternity in the decrees of the mercy of the Most High; all eyes are turned towards the throne of the Supreme Pontiff; a solemn silence reigns in the immense assembly; every heart is elevated towards Heaven. The Universal Church deposes to the throne of the Vicar of Jesus Christ five of her Pastors to beg of him to satisfy at last the devotion of the Christian people, and to define that the belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary is an article of Catholic faith. His Eminence the Cardinal Dean of the Sacred College, accompanied by the Patriarch of Alexandria, the Greek Archbishop and Bishop, is charged to bear to the Pontifical throne the expression of the wish of the Church, and to address to him her urgent prayers. The Vicar of Jesus Christ hearkens to a supplication so agreeable to his

heart, so conformable to the wish of his own piety, and he declares that he wishes once more to invoke the lights of the Holy Ghost, and to consult the Divine will. He kneels down without leaving his throne; all the Church prostrates itself with him, and he intones the *Veni Creator*, the singing of which is continued by the Clergy and by the immense concourse of the Faithful. In the vast basilica an unanimous and ardent prayer issues from every lip, and an all-powerful supplication ascends towards the throne of God. The hymn concluded, the Vicar of Christ arose and chanted the prayers; then, in presence of all the Catholic Church represented by fifty-four Cardinals, by one Patriarch, by forty-two Archbishops, and by one hundred Bishops, by two or three hundred inferior Prelates, by many thousands of Priests and of Religious of all rites, from all countries, of all orders, and of all costumes, and at least fifty thousand Faithful of all conditions and of all countries; with the mitre on his head, and in the attitude of the Supreme Doctor charged with interpreting the sentences and the traditions, and with pronouncing the oracles of the Faith, he commenced the reading of the Decree in that voice grave and sonorous, sweet and majestic, which gives to his words an indefinable charm. After the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Apostles Peter and Paul, to the moment in which he reached the passage concerning the Immaculate Conception, his voice softened, tears mounted to his eyes, and when he pronounced the sacramental words *definimus, decretimus et confirmamus*, his emotion, his tears interrupted him, and he is obliged to stop to wipe away the tears which stream from his eyes; yet we see that he makes a supreme effort to control his emotion, and he

then resumes the reading with that firm and authoritative voice which becomes the Judge of the Faith. His heart mounts to his lips, and we know not whether he preaches or reads, so animated is his voice, so full of emotion; and we feel that the Father of Christendom, the devoted Son of Mary, the Supreme Pastor of the Church, and the infallible Judge of the Faith, speak together; or, rather, that it is the Divine Spirit which speaks by his mouth, and which mingles with the oracles of the doctor of the truth the sentiments of a heart tenderly devoted to Mary. His emotion recommenced when, after having declared that the belief in the Immaculate Conception has been from all time the belief of the Catholic Church, that consequently it must be professed by all her children, and after establishing the penalties they incur who will be sufficiently rash to contradict it, he came again to speak of the graces for which he acknowledged himself indebted to the Most Holy Mother of God, of the hopes that he founds upon her protection for the assuaging of the evils of society and of the Church, and of the happiness that he experiences in advancing the glory of Her whom he has always loved so much, and from whom emanate all the gifts and graces from on High.

But to what purpose prolong an analysis made upon recollections which cannot be perfect or faithful, and which, moreover, will be useless, for we shall soon receive the text of the Decree; but we cannot but admire the manner, strong and sweet at the same time, with which the Vicar of Jesus Christ has proclaimed the infallible oracle which places securely upon the forehead of our great Queen and Mistress the glorious diadem of an Immaculate Conception! Oh! how beautiful it was to see

Pius IX shedding tears of tenderness in crowning his beloved Mother! O precious tears, which the Angels have gathered, and which will sparkle like diamonds upon the crown that the Queen of Angels reserves for the Pontiff who has given her a glory so magnificent! How beautiful were those Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops, listening with love to the Decree which proclaimed the greatness of Mary, gathering with respect the words which fell from the lips of the Supreme Pontiff, and which they will go to repeat throughout the universe, to the infidels of China, to the savages of America, and to the far distant isles of Polynesia, in every language, in every empire, in every quarter of the habitable world! O august senate of the Catholic Church, may you be blessed for assisting at so beautiful a festival! May the fatigues of your long voyages, of your long travels, be superabundantly recompensed by the splendor added on this day to the diadem of the Queen of the Church! May they be happy, your faithful people, when they gather from your lips the words which you have gathered yourselves from the infallible lips of the Sovereign Pastor, and that you say to them: "We were there, we have seen, we have heard! That crown which glitters on the brow of our Mother and thine we have helped to place there!" How beautiful it was to see all those Clergy of the inferior ranks of the Hierarchy, uniting themselves with the Bishops to hail the decree, and prepare themselves to go to proclaim it in the most remote places, in the most distant missions, in the pulpits of the greatest cities and the most humble hamlets! And you, Faithful of all ranks, of every sex and condition, who filled the immense church of the Prince of Apostles, have you ever

seen a higher expression of Catholic unity? Oh! but it was beautiful! but it was agreeable to the Lord, that innumerable assembly, in which all hearts throbbed like one for love of Mary, in which only one mouth was opened as it were, although all spoke, first to beg light from the Holy Ghost in unison with the Holy Father, the Bishops, and the Clergy, afterwards to thank God and salute Mary crowned with the diadem of the Immaculate Conception; for in that consists one of the characteristics the most touching and the most catholic of this admirable *fête*! Scarcely issued from the lips of the Vicar of Christ, the invocation of the Spirit of light and of love is found upon all lips, and one might have said that only a single voice, a voice composed of fifty thousand voices, mounted to Heaven. So the "Te Deum" was no sooner intoned by the Supreme Pontiff than it rose throughout the entire basilica, and it was a hymn boundless in thanks and gratitude, an immense, a universal acclamation of the glorious privilege of Mary. A prayer, ardent and unanimous, which the salvos of the artillery and the pealing of the bells of the city carried to Heaven, and deposited at the feet of the Immaculate Virgin.

But that brilliant crown, which the word of the Vicar of Jesus Christ had just placed upon the blessed head of our Queen and our Mistress, shall it not have a material sign which will symbolize it, and transmit the memory of it to future generations? Pius IX thinks so. A crown of the finest gold, enriched with the most precious stones, is prepared to decorate the head of the Immaculate Virgin, which the mosaic art has represented, *in æternum*, above the high altar of the Chapel of the Canons. After the "Te Deum" this splendid diadem is blessed by the Pope

on the same altar of the Confession, and the Sovereign Pontiff, preceded by his magnificent and imposing train, goes processionally to carry to the venerated Madonna the diadem prepared by the signal piety of the Chapter of St. Peter's. With his sacred hands he deposited the precious crown upon the brow of the august Sovereign of Heaven and earth, of the glorious Queen of the Church; in presence of the whole court of the Church Militant, in presence, too, of the whole court of the Church Triumphant; for it is not permitted to doubt that the Angels assisted at that *fête* in which she whom they had eighteen centuries and a half since saluted with these words: *Ave Maria, gratia plena*, is to-day saluted by those other words: *Ave Maria, sine labe originali concepta!* a double salutation which is only one, for the last is the development, the completion of the first, Reign, then, for ever, O glorious Princess! O most beloved Mother! crowned doubly in Heaven by thy Son, who is God, on the earth by the Vicar of thy Son, who is the Pope Pius IX, by the Universal Church, and by all the Christian people!

We might now leave the basilica of St. Peter's, where the ceremony has been concluded, so to say, in transmitting to posterity a visible sign which will not perish; but it is necessary before doing so to point out two or three incidents which have singularly affected the few persons who witnessed them. Do you see that sedan chair which, at half-past eight o'clock, is carried towards the confession by the servants of the Holy Father in their red and brilliant livery? They walk with precaution and respect; they are conducting to the *fête* a holy and learned Bishop, invited by the Holy Father, seized on the voyage by sickness, and who wished to brave the fatigues of a long

road, and the dangers of an agitated sea, and whom the tempests, even the approach of death, could not deter from repairing to Rome to place his gem in the diadem of the Queen of Heaven, to hear the dogma proclaimed which he had called for with his ardent wishes, his fervent prayers, and by his votes as Doctor and as Bishop. He heard proceeding from the infallible mouth of Peter, speaking by Pius IX, that desired oracle, and he withdrew then content and joyful; he can now die; he has seen the triumph of his beloved Mother on the earth; he also has gained his battle—he has not been deficient in a courage not less heroic than that of the general whom the whole world lately hailed with its eulogiums and its regrets. On issuing from the church, one of his parishioners met him and expressed his joy at seeing him. “And I, too,” replied the pious and meek Prelate, “am content. I have seen that which I so much desired. I have come to die here.” “Oh, no, my Lord,” replied the other, “the Holy Virgin will cure you!” “If Mary conceived without sin will cure me, I shall return to my diocese to proclaim there her power and her goodness; but I can die better here; it will not be bad to die here.”

That Bishop of the old times was a French Bishop—the holy and courageous Bishop of Mans—who preferred to expose himself to the danger of dying on the sea or on a road of France or Italy, rather than to fail at the call of the Sovereign Pontiff to be present at the meeting given by the Holy Virgin herself. And we see here how our Bishops know how to love Mary, and what they can do and suffer for her glory.

And that venerable old man, all robed in white, who walks supported by two persons, and goes to sit down in

the midst of the Cardinals, who is he? What comes he to do in this assembly, weighed down by his years and scarcely able to creep along? He is a Prince of the Church, dear to the poor, for whom he is a liberal provider, although poor himself; the friend of Gregory XVI; the ornament by his virtues of the Sacred College; he is the Cardinal Bianchi; he has wished to drag himself to this *fête* to hear the reading of the Decree which fulfils his wishes—to assist at the triumph of the Queen of the Church—and after hearing proclaimed by the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the dogma so dear to his religious heart, to withdraw supported upon the arms which sustain him, and without doubt to repeat in his heart the canticle of the holy Simeon when he saw the Lord in the Temple: *Nunc dimittis servum.*

Then, whilst the Sovereign Pontiff is taking off his sacred ornaments, see approaching him two Religious, two chiefs of the great and holy family of the seraphic St. Francis, the General of the Conventuals and the General of the Observants. The one holds a branch of the golden lily, the other a branch of the silver lily; they present them to the Holy Father, and beg of him to receive them as a feeble homage of the gratitude of the Franciscan family for the new glory that he had just given to the Mother of Christians, to the special patroness of their secular institute, for the consecration definitively and infallibly stamped upon the belief that was always the dearest inheritance of its doctors, and its schools, and its numberless Saints and Blessed, which it had given to the Church Triumphant. It is with tears that this tribute of love is offered by the pious children of St. Francis; it is with tears that it is received by the Sovereign Pontiff.

But there is not, in the Catholic Church, any feast which is truly beautiful if the people do not make the principal ornament of it. We have spoken of the Princes of the Church, of all the orders of the Clergy; we have seen all the holy Hierarchy rival each other in eagerness and love; but the Faithful, but the people, what part did they take in this festival? To them it appertained to impress its true character upon it. Have their hearts been moved? It is really and truly a popular and universal belief that has been defined, and are the children of the Church desirous to say and to see decreed to Mary the title of Immaculate in her Conception? Ah! the reply to that question has been made; it is there all living. See that multitude from seven o'clock in the morning direct itself towards the ancient basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, and which fills its vast nave and even the chapels, ordinarily so solitary, which squeezes itself forward and is incessantly renewed. There is a continual flowing and reflowing of the human tide. The vast entrances of the basilica cannot suffice for these thousands of Faithful who besiege and encumber them. Thirty thousand persons, as the best judges say, are together in the church, and as the crowd entered and flowed away without cessation from seven o'clock in the morning until an hour after mid-day, at least sixty thousand persons must have assisted at the *fête*. And what pious recollection in that multitude! What an air of satisfaction! How the *Veni Creator* and the *Te Deum* moved and agitated it, and how it chanted with love and with faith those prayers of invocation and praise! And the rest of the population, as it filled the churches of the Holy City, as it gave itself to the movement to prepare the illumination

which changed the night of this beautiful day into a heaven all strewn with stars! How, at the sound of the bells which announced the consummation of that great act, it prostrated itself, and hailed the Virgin without spot or blemish! What holy canticles were addressed to her in the convents, in the bosom of families, in the secrecy of hearts!

Then came the evening, and it was then that the faith, that the joy of the people shone and burst out, and the entire city became a temple raised to Mary. From the previous evening, notwithstanding the rain, and despite the tempest, thousands of lights saluted the dawning of the day which was about to break: but the evening of the *fête* the city was literally a city of fire; not a balcony, not a window, not a skylight which had not its illumination lamps. The great thoroughfares of the city, the Corso, the Papal way, Ripetta, are luminous streams; the public squares, the monuments, the churches, bear piles of fire. The Capitol gleams and flashes with light, and the orchestras in the open air hail in the name of the Roman people the triumph of the Queen of Heaven, who is also the Queen of the Church of Rome. Everywhere are transparencies and images of Mary, inscriptions in her honor; above all the device, *Maria sine labe originali concepta*. An immense multitude urged their way through the city; the whole population is in the streets, on the squares, but especially at St. Peter's, whose dome bore high in the air a sparkling diadem. One might say that a special providence had wished to give to that illumination, of which every one acknowledged the greatness and the beauty, an unaccustomed splendor. A dark cloud, the only one there was in the sky, which was there as if to keep us in mind

of the rain and tempest of the preceding night, formed behind the cupola a sombre and dark background, which admirably set off that crown of fire which the Eternal City offered to the Queen of the Universe. O night more beautiful than the day! O pavilions of light, kindled to illuminate the festival of Our Mother! O Queen of the Heavens! what crown more beautiful can the earth offer to you?

Such has been the festival of the 8th December at Rome, or rather such has been a part, the most feeble perhaps, of that imperishable *fête*. For the rest: that is only the first day; it is the commencement of the *fêtes*. On the 10th, another solemnity attracted to St. Paul's, outside the walls, the whole of the Holy City: the Pope, assisted by two hundred Bishops and all the Clergy, went there to consecrate the Church of the Apostle of the Gentiles, the dedication of which is thus allied to the triumph of the Queen of Heaven. On the evening of the same day the Academy of Arcades held in the Capitol, in the great hall of the Senate, a solemn sitting, in which Cardinal Wiseman celebrated the recently defined mystery; and the next day, the 11th, the Academy of the Immaculate Conception had announced a sitting not less brilliant in the Church of the Holy Apostles, to *fête* the glorious privilege of which it bears the name, and in which it has always professed the belief. Triduums are held in the majority of the churches. In fine, it is a festival without end, and indeed the people cannot weary of singing the glory, of celebrating the victory, of the great and powerful Queen of Earth and Heaven. And that festival, commenced in Rome, will be continued throughout the entire world. The bell of St. Peter's will set in motion

the bells of the entire earth, and even in the solitudes of the New World, and in the furthestmost countries of the Old, the word of the Sovereign Pontiff will be repeated, and hailed with acclamation. Everywhere the Immaculate Conception shall be celebrated and glorified. At this thought, may we not hope, for the world and for the Church, the great prosperity which the Saints have foretold for the period which would see the incomparable privilege of Mary proclaimed? May we not believe, that Our Mother will repay to us in blessings the homage that we have offered her? How doubt that the increase of glory which she has just received is, for us, the pledge of a better present, and a more prosperous future? That has been the hope of the Saints; it is the hope of Pius IX, this other Holy Pontiff, this Angel of the Church, whose Pontificate will be henceforward glorious amongst all those which have advanced the reign of Mary, which have exalted her privileges and her greatness!



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